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Ferguson, Plattner, Rosenblatt, Tyrrell, Surveying TV News Coverage: Politics as a Side Show

William Schneider on SALT

Interview with Edith Efron

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the ALTERNATIVE to bare the witness and the truth

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Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed or (most redundantly of all) national origin — and yes, sex, even sex.

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The Continuing Crisis

• As September recedes into history it appears that Mr. Nixon is still following the widely appreciated campaign strategy of his illustrious Republican predecessors, Harding and McKinley. History remembers the strategy as the front porch campaign, and today there are congeries of dazed Democrats wishing their candidate too would adopt it, rather than continue to furiously criss-cross the country delivering manifestoes, apologizing and, generally speaking, scaring hell out of every Democrat up for election. As of September 25, Mr. Nixon leads the Resurrected Bryan sixty-two per cent to twenty-three per cent according to a poll conducted by Daniel Yankelovich, Inc. Moreover, Mr. Nixon has overtaken Dr. McGovern even among registered Democrats by forty-three per cent to forty per cent, but the campaign is bound to heat up in October, and if the fates of Thelman S. Reid and the Watergate Seven are any indication, things will grow more acrimonious. Reid is the chief sidewalk inspector for Cleveland who has been indicted for making false teeth without a dental license. Shortly thereafter, the Watergate seven — two of them former employees of the White House — were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury after being caught *flagrante delicto* at Democratic National Headquarters on the evening of June 17. Curiously odoriferous allegations are still rising around the Department of Agriculture, suggesting several kinds of malversations. McGovern's campaign accountants are being compared with his economists, by Senator Dole, and in San Jose Superior Court John Smith, upon being asked by Judge John Foster if he would "tell the truth, the whole truth, etc.," told the truth and was slapped into the calaboose. His answer had been "no."

• During the week ending September 23, the lights burned nightly in foreign ministries throughout the world as military columns streamed into Uganda from Tanzania. Uganda's Exalted President and grammar school drop out, General Idi Amin I, threatened to unleash holocaust. An expeditionary force from Libya was detained by the constabulary at the airport of the Sudan while the Ugandese air force rained terror over several Tanzanian corn fields, cutting a major Tanzanian ox trail. By September 26, the crisis seemed to have soothed, but only after Somali Foreign Minister Omar Arteh had propitiated the distinguished General with a five point peace plan, and virtually forcing the Nobel Peace Prize committee to change its decision against awarding a Nobel Peace Prize this year. Earlier, on September 2, President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire expelled a Belgian missionary for baptizing two babies with illegal names, and President Nixon met with Japanese Premier Kakuei Tanaka in Honolulu. Meanwhile, as hog cholera swept through the midwest, George Mc-

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Editorial I:

Magic World, Reform Thyself!

There is something about a television studio that makes us all, conversationally speaking, below par.
Peregrine Worsthorne, *Encounter*

Today's bitter pother over television news was inescapable. The rancorous barrage that has been leveled against every established American institution eventually had to splatter even into the sanctums of so prosperous and celebrated an establishment as that of the television industry. Only the most oblivious moss back would find the controversy surprising. What is appalling, however, is television news' dazed response. One would have thought that an industry, always so eager to indulge the critics of other establishments, would have been grateful to those who had discovered its improprieties. But how wrong we were! Asking Walter Cronkite or David Brinkley about the possibility of a little telltale bias in their art is like asking the Pope if he frequents the massage parlors of Times Square — responses vary from gaping disbelief to dudgeon and reveal the depth of the problem for critics authentically concerned about television.

In considering television it is perhaps helpful to think of it as a distinctly American phenomenon, for the values of television news are derived from American society and they in turn affect that society's values. Though some newsmen will consider it the cruelest calumny of all, American television news has a lot in common with apple pie.

A changing American society presaged changes in television news. That television news has leaned adamantly against change reveals the force of inertia in deciding policy within a corporate giant. Yet television news is too typically American to resist America forever. Eventually it will acquiesce to the times, though what form it will take when it does acquiesce remains a mystery.

Consider how changed historical circumstances have beset the industry's famed "Fairness Doctrine." The evolution of this doctrine reveals as much about what has been happening to American society as it reveals about what has been happening to (or not happening to) television.

When the FCC first handed down its doctrine about equal time, it assumed a broad commonality amongst Americans. Most Americans adhered to the same hazy prejudices serried together as philosophy, the same general expectations, the same general life styles. The squawks of dissidence were ignored. Popular culture — its idiotic music, movies, etc. — still enchanted the vast majority of Americans. Movies were not yet specifically tailored for the hightoned tastes of Afro-Americans or women or youth. There was no youth culture or ethnic culture — at least not one that preempted mob culture. And most importantly, American politics was American, not deeply conservative, not punctiliously liberal, not radical, or homosexual or any of the other exotic specimens now strutting the land. America still had its sense of commonality, and everyone still tried to melt into the same pot. In such quiescent times it was simple to define fairness in broadcasting. And in 1949, fairness had evolved to the point that stations were expected to give equal time to those who disagreed with their editorials. Ideally, broadcasters were to give equal time to all *popular* views on *popular* issues. And, though the broadcasters did not exactly applaud the decision, they swallowed it. Henceforth, newsmen simply ignored the odd fish. When some poor fellow squalled about bias, the aggrieved newsman magisterially reminded viewers of his "professionalism." Under heavy weather he had the Fairness Doctrine to support him, and, of course, he had that mysterious formula for objectivity that only a genuine newsman seems to understand.

The odd fish that newsmen could once so cavalierly ignore carry on nowadays in vastly greater abundance. American society encourages eccentricity and even extremism, while its middle ground washes away, and the poor news industry remains forlornly clutching its outdated Fairness Doctrine. Divisions in American society are deep; public opinion has shattered into many disparate views. Ideological barricades are being thrown up all across the country. Disagreement is more fundamental than in the early days of broadcasting. People not only question a newsman's bias, they question his very conception of what is newsworthy. Obviously, under such pressures, the newsman's assertion of superior "professionalism" or "objectivity" is empty. Newsmen can find no refuge in the FCC's Fairness Doctrine because it is itself pitifully inadequate.

Supposedly, the FCC is working furiously to revise its doctrine. Yet any revision of the Fairness Doctrine that still embraces the idea of "equal time" will only make television more boring and inane than it is. Unfortunately, the FCC still seems to have hopes for its balmy notions about equal time. Such aspirations are noble but obviously preposterous. Only a bureaucrat could find them satisfying. If the FCC continues on this track, automobile ads will be accompanied by ads from every automobile critic from Mr. Nader to the Amish. Television news will have to provide special editions for every subculture, and on it will go. Obviously, this is madness, but then confusion is often a prelude to madness, and it seems television has always been a most confused creature.

To begin with there has been all of this semantic confusion over fairness and bias and objectivity. Contrary to television news' superficial understanding, a fair story can still abound with bias. Fairness means treating all men equally according to the same code, while the lack of bias implies a lack of prejudice. If the code itself contains a prejudice — as indeed the FCC code does — the news will be biased. And an increasing amount of scholarly study has nailed this point down. The newsmen's claim to fairness does not preclude bias nor does it establish objectivity. It is the newsmen's confusion over this that has made their flabbergasted response to critics like Mr. Agnew and Miss Edith Efron so heart-rending. They really believe themselves to be fair, objective and unbiased. It is a sincere confusion.

One of their most poignant confusions, however, issues from their confused identities. The television news industry sees itself as the lastest word in journalism. It has replaced the presses with the electronic wizardry of microphones, television cameras and all the latest gadgetry. From this confusion they proceed to claim the same immunities from government as those possessed by newspapers. And they further flummox things by "reporting the news," producing "documentaries," "editorials," "commentaries" and "diaries." They even have "desks" and "editors." One imaginative newsman actually refers to sequences of his performance as "page one" and "page two." Such are the wonders of television land.

Of course, this is as phony as the Senator's toupee. When the networks claim the same freedom from government intervention, as, say, the *New York Times*, they are sweeping aside several scowling truths — not the least of which is their shady ancestry. Newspapers are private businesses. Their utterances are shielded by the Bill of Rights. On the other hand, the networks, their affiliates, and for that matter, all independent television stations are government sanctioned oligopolies. They were born of government decree, and their very growth is controlled by government. They do not possess the same freedoms as newspapers, and as long as they depend on government licensing, they cannot be free from government.

Every aspect of television creeps about under grovernment stewardship, from advertising (e.g. the cigarette crusade) to ownership (e.g. the fate of Boston's WHDH and its erstwhile owner the Herald Traveller Corporation). In fact, a man cannot even sell a television station without the FCC's permission—a permission which can actually be withheld. Television men are as dependent on the government as farmers are on the weather, and both hold these fearsome masters in the same moronic awe. Recently the FCC actually forced the television stations of Georgia to carry the virulently racist campaign commercials of a mentally defective white supremist, despite the stations' protests. No newspaper would ever submit to such intrusions by government. Television has no claim on the First Amendment, and Justice White said as much in *The Red Lion* Case. →

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Until television is constituted differently even CBS will have to bow before Congressional investigations and the other less obvious coercions in government's arsenal. When television executives go about waving the Bill of Rights, they are either deceiving the public or suffering from the confusions that haunt their industry.

And consider television's working press. Walter Cronkite is no more a journalist than was Basil Rathbone a private detective. Mr. Cronkite has not left his bar stool to cover a story in years. He reports just what his handlers tell him to read. He has no special wisdom concerning American politics. Indeed, he is often quite as ignorant about the American political system as is the president of Uganda. It was tellingly demonstrated in the recent convention coverage that television newsmen are no competition for newspaper journalists. Television newsmen do not read seriously and they rarely write. All they consistently do is talk and pose. They are second-rate actors and first-rate gossips. They are little else. Cronkite's memoirs will be an embarrassment. They could be ghost written by Arnold Toynbee, and they would still sound silly.

Or let us reflect on Mr. Chet Huntley, late of the Huntley-Brinkley Report. He retired at an early age, anticipating a palmy future in high finance and statecraft. What he has become is a noxious real estate tycoon, condemned for his environmental depredations and mayhem. And as for his pretentions to statecraft, all that remain are hoo haws. He now appears on television endorsing air travel much the same way pug athletes endorse men's toiletries. So it seems to me that the kinship between the newspaperman and the television newsman is about like the kinship between the American Indian and his cousin from the cigar store era. Mr. Cronkite may be confused about himself, but no intelligent newspaperman is confused about him.

And the differences repose deep within the two crafts. Their products take on different forms, stemming from different imperatives. A newspaper story focuses on an event. It has a powerful headline and a first paragraph which starkly outlines the facts of the event. After that the story expends itself in an unexciting, if informative, recapitulation or elaboration. This is nothing like television news. Television news stories must be interesting throughout. They must have a clear narrative line that is dramatic from beginning to end. When one reads a newspaper, one concentrates to such a degree that one can really do little else. When one watches the evening news one can gulp down dinner or hoot along with the bartender. Television just does not demand a great deal of concentration; indeed, it cannot. Due to its limited command on a viewer's peripheral vision, television does not attract more than limited attention. So it is that the information imparted in a television news story must be rudimentary, and if the events contributing to a news story are complicated, they must be simplified. Finally, and most importantly, news stories must be entertaining.

The yearning that nudges a person to flip on a television set is much vaguer than the compulsion that drives a person to buy a newspaper. This ambiguity in the television audience, combined with television's limited capacity to transmit information, forces news stories to focus on themes. Themes are easier to comprehend, and they are more likely to be entertaining. But they are not always reliable or even informative. Unlike the newspaper story, the television story relegates facts and events to a secondary role in deference to themes. Unfortunately, themes demand personification and dramatization at the expense of authenticity. Themes encourage not the dull delineation of facts, but the interpretation of events, and so television newsmen are given to telling their audiences not simply what happened, but what *really* happened and *why* it happened. This of course often does violence to objectivity, but it is dramatic and entertaining and these are the primary values of television news — values exactly opposite those of the serious journalist. Such revelations have brought protests and tantrums from the telegenic muggs of network news, but as the polls indicate, an increasing number of Americans are not taking the newsmen so seriously these days.

As the serious study of television news continues, the confusions underlying television will become apparent. Yet how can we make a medium informative when its competence to deal with complexity is so limited? And how can television as presently constituted ever overcome the charges of bias and unfairness? How can television be reformed?

Perhaps the most auspicious step toward reforming television will be to recognize television for what it is: a man-made machine that inauthentically recreates man and his fantasies. All of Dr. McCluhan's bossy declarations about the New Age have besotted us. Television has yet to replace time and space.

As for bias and fairness, I cannot see how our present situation will be improved until television is fundamentally reorganized. We cannot eliminate bias, and it is foolish to try. At no time is society more chillingly imperiled than when government dedicates itself to achieving the impossible. Besides, what troubles us is not bias, but the monoply of bias. Serious critics of television have suggested that that monoply could be broken if the government would loose its hold on television by auctioning the frequencies to private corporations and encouraging the growth of cable television. By multiplying the opportunities for individual expression, government would neutralize much of the sting of bias while clearing away some of the rubbish about fairness.

There are many more suggestions that can be made, I am sure, but all will be for naught so long as the television industry refuses to acknowledge the need for change. That acknowledgment seems to be a long way off. I imagine television's reluctance to reform itself comes as a jolt to New Populists and other such woolly advocates of government commissions. They always have such magnificent hopes for the strong medicine of devine contraptions like the FCC. Personally I hold no such aspirations. In this century government has been able to consistently do only two things well: inflate the currency and wage war. And after Vietnam I cannot really say that it still performs the latter with its prowess of old.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Editorial II:

The Response to Munich, Today and Tomorrow

It is natural that people have been shocked by the murder in Munich of eleven members of the Israeli Olympic team by Arab terrorists; it is appropriate that people have mourned the slain Israelis by issuing statements, holding ceremonies and so on; and it is understandable that people have tried to make sense out of this senseless event and expressed the hope that such an event will never happen again. But what is natural, appropriate and understandable is, from a practical standpoint, not necessarily adequate or even helpful.

Most of the shock over the murder of the Israeli Olympians apparently has been evoked simply by the act itself and its disruptive effect on the Olympic games, not by the general activities and ultimate ends of the terrorists and their supporters. Much of the mourning over the slain Israelis has been accompanied by moralizing that confuses or obscures important matters and inhibits strong action against the terrorists and their supporters. And many of the efforts to make sense out of the slaughter at Munich have been based on simplistic notions about political and social circumstances in the Middle East.

Consider some examples of the moralizing that has accompanied much of the mourning. Since Munich, we repeatedly have been lectured to, in one way or another, about "man's inhumanity to man" and we repeatedly have been told, in one way or another, that "violence solves nothing." Now, to talk about "man's inhumanity to man" is to talk about how one abstraction ("man") acts (inhumanly) toward another abstraction ("man"), which turns out to be the same abstraction. It is difficult to see what such abstract talk is good for except to divert attention from important concrete matters or dilute the matters themselves. It was not "man" but Arab terrorists who killed the Israeli athletes.

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the ALTERNATIVE November 1972

William Schneider, Jr.:

The Aftermath of SALT

The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) negotiated it; the President signed it; the Congress ratified it; now we must live with it. The subject of discussion of course, is the Strategic Arms Limitation Accords. More than any other arms control arrangement we have entered into, details make a difference, not merely for the purpose of carrying out the intent of the original agreement, but also for our negotiating posture for the second round of SALT.

Between the time when agreements were signed, and when the Congress ratified them, perceptions changed indicating at least some disquiet over the consequences of the first round of the SALT accords. How this concern developed, and the outlook for phase two, is instructive as to how the Congress is likely to behave in the future.

The SALT Accords and the Strategic Balance: a Primer

On May 26, 1972 President Nixon and Soviet Communist party General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev signed two agreements: the first is in the form of an Executive Agreement (Interim Offensive Agreement) limiting the deployment of intercontinental (ICBM) and submarine-launched (SLBM) ballistic missiles. The second is a formal treaty restricting to nominal levels, the deployment of anti-ballistic missiles systems (ABM).

The purpose of the Interim Agreement on offensive arms is to "freeze," for five years, the deployment of ICBM's and SLBM's at specified limits. During the term of the Interim Agreement, both sides are to seek a permanent set of limitations on strategic offensive arms including elements not included in the Interim Agreement such as strategic intercontinental bombers and U.S. aircraft based in Europe as well as U.S. aircraft carriers with aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons on Soviet territory (known as "Forward Based Systems"). If no permanent agreement is reached, or both sides do not renew the agreement at the end of five years, both sides may resume their deployment of strategic offensive systems.

The ABM Treaty seeks to maintain the existing deterrent relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union by prohibiting each side from obtaining a capacity to protect its strategic nuclear forces or civilian population centers from ballistic missile attacks. The defense philosophy mandated by the ABM Treaty is that deterrence is to be maintained by assuring the mutual vulnerability of each side's

"Put up or Shut up, Leonid"

civilian population. Both sides are prohibited from taking defensive measures (other than civil defense) to protect their citizens against the consequences of a failure of deterrence at any time in the future even if technology should provide such means. The ABM Treaty provides that neither side shall maintain a system to defend against attacks by ballistic missiles except for the nominal defense (a total of 200 anti-ballistic missiles) of national capitals (Washington and Moscow) and a single strategic missile base. Moreover, the treaty seeks to permanently prevent any future technological development, test or deployment (for example, a space-based ABM system "laser") which could provide for a highly effective defense for population centers, against ballistic missile attack from being applied in that role.

The Interim Agreement on offensive forces provides for limitations on offensive weapons deployment for ICBM's and SLBM's only. The agreement does not impose limitation on bombers, number of warheads (of the "MIRV" or multiple warhead type), missile accuracy or other characteristics of strategic nuclear forces. Since 1966, the Soviet Union has focused its strategic buildup on ICBM's and SLBM's. With regard to ICBM's only two properties are restricted: the total number of ICBM's (limited to those in operation or under construction as of July 1, 1972), and the approximate size of the missile silos, the underground housing for the ICBM. The latter restriction places a ceiling on the most important characteristic of ballistic missiles in the long run its payload capacity (or "throw-weight") by limiting the size of the missile which can be placed in a silo. The significance of this characteristic is that the payload capacity determines the maximum number of individual warheads that can be placed upon a single missile. For example, if one missile has twice the payload capacity of another missile, the larger missile can carry twice the number of warheads carried by the smaller.

The terms of the Interim Agreement permit the Soviet Union to have a greater number of ICBM's, as well as a greater payload capacity in its entire strategic force. The effect of the agreement with regard to ICBM's is as below.

The United States has no counterpart to the heavy Soviet ICBM's. The current SS-9 missile has a payload capacity five times that of the Minuteman III missile, our largest and most modern ICBM, and an even larger Soviet missile with a payload capacity eight times that of the Minuteman III could be used to replace the SS-9, further augmenting the Soviet advantage in payload capacity. The Soviets may not convert their "light" ICBM's into "Heavy" ICBM's, nor may the United States do so. Both sides may convert their obsolete ICBM's into an equivalent number of SLBM's. The payload capacity of the Soviet "heavy" ICBM's exceeds the entire United States payload by a factor of three.

The United States has forty-one modern submarines capable of launching SLBM's. Each carries sixteen SLBM's; ultimately thirty-one will be equipped with Poseidon multiple warhead (MIRV) missles, the remaining ten submarines will be equipped with the older Polaris missile with a single warhead. Near the end of the decade, the ten Polaris firing submarines will be replaced by a larger

	UNITED STATES	SOVIET UNION
Modern "heavy" ICBM's	**0**	**313 (SS-9, or a new larger missile about to be tested)**
Modern "light" ICBM's	**1000 (Minuteman)**	**1100 (SS-11, SS-13)**
Obsolete ICBM's	**54 (Titan)**	**209 (SS-7, SS-13)**

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submarine known as Triden (formerly called ULMS).

The Soviet Union has 26 modern submarines of the "Y" class in operation, and 17 more under construction. These are each equipped with 16 SLBM's each with single warheads. The terms of the SALT accords will permit the Soviets to build 62 modern (Polaris-equivalent) submarines. In addition, the Soviets may retain 22 older "G" class submarines firing three SLBM's each. The Protocol restricts the U.S. to a maximum of 44 modern submarines with no more than 710 SLBM's. The Soviet Union may have no more than 950 SLBM's or no more than 62 modern submarines for a total of 84 submarines and 1016 SLBM's.

Maximum Permissible Ballistic Missile Firing Submarines

	U.S.		SOVIET UNION	
	Sub.	Missiles	Sub.	Missiles
Modern	44	710	62	950
Older Types	0	0	22	66
TOTAL	44	710	84	1016

The terms of the Interim Agreement permit the Soviet Union to dismantle their 209 obsolete SS-7 and SS-8 ICBM's as well as some of their older diesel-powered ballistic missile launching submarines into modern nuclear powered submarines similar to the U.S. Polaris-Poseidon-type (the Soviet "Y" class). The U.S. only has 54 older ballistic missiles (the Titan II) which it may dismantle to add three additional submarines to those already deployed (41) for a total of 44. Unaffected by the agreement are manned strategic intercontinental bombers and qualitative improvements to the existing forces such as multiple warheads, improved accuracy and other improvements. Neither the U.S. or the Soviet Union may increase the number of their ICBM force. However, the Soviet Union will be able to "modernize" their "heavy" missiles, 313 SS-9's with a new missle (noted above) with nearly twice the payload capacity of the existing SS-9's. Since the U.S. is not permitted any heavy missiles under the agreement, the payload capacity of the U.S. ICBM force cannot be significantly increased.

The U.S. is free to develop and deploy the Trident (ULMS) submarine. The Soviet Union is free to develop its modified "Y" class submarine to accommodate a recently developed new SLBM.

The U.S. is free to develop and deploy the B-1 bomber, the proposed new intercontinental bomber. The Soviet Union is free to develop and deploy its new intercontinental bomber, the Backfire.

The U.S. is free to make further qualitative improvements to its forces, including multiple warheads (MIRV), improved accuracy, and others. The Soviet Union is also free to make qualitative improvements of the same kind. However, because of the advantage conferred on the Soviet Union by the SALT accords in payload capacity of ICBM's, (a 5-to-1 advantage) and numbers of SLBM's, (a 3-to-2 advantage) their potential for qualitative improvement is vastly greater than for U.S. forces. Thus, the strategic balance could be as below if the Soviets make only modest qualitative improvements in their forces permitted under the agreements.

The Jackson Amendment: Delayed Reaction to SALT

For over a month, the Senate Armed Services Committee, spearheaded by Senator Jackson proceeded to drag a host of unpleasant details out of the United States negotiating team. (One observer has noted that a consequence of the title of the parent agency of the United States SALT team, the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, has given the negotiations the wrong perspective. Because it is entitled the United States rather than the Soviet Union Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the negotiators feel impelled to disarm the United States rather than the Soviet Union. This may be something of an overstatement but based upon the attitudes expressed by these officials at the hearings, it is not too wide of the mark.) For example, the United States Secretary of Defense could not agree with the SALT delegation head as to whether the Soviet Union could increase their ICBM silo volume by 15 per cent of 52 per cent. Such confusion is understandable since the accords themselves are so poorly drafted in detail that an ambiguous interpretation in almost every detail is feasible.

Senator Jackson and others were appalled at this performance and were determined to provide the SALT team with some explicit Congressional guidance as to the appropriate formulation for any permanent agreement on offensive arms. This determination coincided with growing concern within the administration as to the ability of the United States to negotiate a favorable agreement in the future. While retaining a semblance of a sound defense posture. The result was Administration support of the Jackson amendment to the Interim Agreement.

The amendment provided for three things: (1) Failure to reach a permanent agreement within five years could "jeopardize the supreme national interests of the United States." Thus the Congress would not be willing to live with the SALT I disparity for more than five years. (2) The United States should not accept an inferior number of whatever parameter was fixed in a permanent agreement from that assignd to the Soviet Union. Thus, the Congress was unwilling to accept complex theories of how parity exists by pointing to elements of the strategic balance which lie outside of the agreement itself. (3) The Congress committed itself to support a vigorous R&D effort.

The cries of anguish from Senator J. W. Fulbright *et al.* were as noisy as they were predictable, but, after weeks of debate, they were passed by a substantial margin.

The consequences for our future negotiating posture are substantial. ACDA cannot carry its free-and-easy attitude toward the United States defense posture to the bargaining table because there are enough votes in the Senate to prevent the acceptance of a permanent agreement which is as disadvantageous to the United States as the Interim Agreement is. Moreover, the Soviet Union will have to contend with a more

Hypothesized Strategic Balance 1978
Number of Warheads*

UNITED STATES		SOVIET UNION	
MINUTEMAN III (550 missiles at 3 warheads)	1650	SS-9 (MODIFIED) (313 Missiles at 20 warheads)	6260
MINUTEMAN II (450 missiles at 1 warhead)	450	SS-11 (1000 missiles at 2 warheads	2000
TITAN II (54 missiles at 1 warhead)	54	SS-13 (100 missiles at 2 warheads)	200
POLARIS A3 (10 boats, 16 missiles at 1 warhead)	160	TU-20 and MYA-4 HEAVY BOMBERS (140 aircraft at 10 missiles and/or bombs)	1400
POSEIDON (31 boats, 16 missiles at 10 warheads)	4960	TU-16 and TU-22 MEDIUM BOMBERS (700 aircraft at 5 missiles and/or bombs)	3500
B-52 HEAVY BOMBERS (400 aircraft at 10 missiles and/or bombs)	4000	"Y" CLASS SUBMARINE (62 boats, 16 missiles at 1 warhead)	950
FB-111 MEDIUM BOMBERS (100 Aircraft at 5 missiles and or bombs)	500	"G" CLASS SUBMARINE (22 boats, 3 missiles at 1 warhead)	66
TOTAL	11774	TOTAL	14376

*These estimates are conservative because they assume that the Soviet Union will not be capable of matching the United States engineering ability in multiple warhead technology within the next five years. (If the Soviet Union were able to do so, they have sufficient payload capacity in their ICBM force *alone* to mount 35,000 of our Poseidon-type warheads.)

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explicit expression of Congressional attitude.

The near term result is likely to be Soviet stalling on the modification of the ICBM and SLBM limitations since they already have a major advantage. The danger lies in the fact that the United States might feel constrained to accept a disadvantageous limitation in Forward Based Systems or manned bombers to reduce the Soviet advantage gained in SALT I in ICBM's and SLBM's.

The long term outlook is less related to technical details than it is to the "temperature" of international relations. Despite the Stakhanovite appearance of the Brezhnev regime, Soviet society is unstable with a number of internal political, social and economic pressures which could alter the character of the regime. The Soviet leadership in the hands of what the British Sovietologist, Robert Conquest described as "third rate men" encourages great prudence in any long term arms limitation with the Soviet Union. That perception appears to have won the day with a majority of the United States Senate. □

William Schneider, Jr., formerly of the Hudson Institute, now serves on the staff of New York's Senator James Buckley.

John Avey:

Diary of a Mad Lover

Wednesday July 5, 1972

Dear Diary, I am in love with the *New York Times*. There, I've said it. I know that older and wiser heads say we're wrong for each other, but there's no use pretending anymore. I know she's a proud and haughty beauty, solvent beyond the dreams of misers and I am but a miserable wretch, debt-ridden and losing my hair. I know she'll find out about my past, about those youthful infatuations with the New York *Daily News* and the old *Journal-American* and even (God forgive me, it broke my mother's heart) my fling with the Daily *Mirror*. I fully realize that even a glance at some voluptuous headline in a tabloid can turn my head. But now, at last, I know that this is just a casual lust. When I'm with the *Times*, I forget about cheap thrills and tawdry pleasures because I know this is the kind of love that will last.

Why do I love her? Let me count the ways she has captured my foolish heart: **I love her because she is optimistic.** The major story on the front page today concerns the gains made by South Vietnamese troops near Quangtri City. Now I know that this must come as a big disappointment to the *Times*, because for longer than either of us care to remember, she has been telling the world that the South Vietnamese can't do anything right. But does this bad news of South Vietnamese gains upset her? Like heck! She's got class. Once you get past the headline, you find out that "some American and South Vietnamese officers" (my dream-girl never kisses and tells) say that the lack of enemy resistance can be attributed to "incessant bombing and shelling," while American bombers continue to "pulverize the landscape." In short, the South Vietnamese are using dirty tactics like air and artillary support, the rats. But if you don't like that theory, another quickly follows: "an American officer in the field" (we must have the most anonymous officer corps in the history of warfare) says that the enemy is simply outflanking the South Vietnamese. So you can't say the *Times* doesn't give you both sides of the story. Either the South Vietnamese are cowards who gain only because Americans pulverize the landscape or they are fools who, as they advance, are being outflanked by a wily enemy.

But its when you get to page two that my sweety shows how to think positively. The headline to the only story on the page is: QUANGTRI VILLAGERS TELL OF FLEEING BOMBING. Here is the lead paragraph: "They had lived for nearly two months under North Vietnamese occupation, but, they say, it was the constant pounding by American bombs and shells, not Communist rule, that finally drove them to desperation and to escape."

Golly, Diary, it makes you feel goosebumpy all over. The *Times* has managed, in one headline and one paragraph of a story to (a) discredit the South Vietnamese counter offensive, (b) make the Americans appear to be the villains, (c) imply that if the Americans had not bombed and shelled, the villagers would have been content to stay under Communist domination. A girl as economical as that will sure make some lucky guy a good housewife.

I love her because she is subtle. On page three there is even a better headline: SAIGON INTELLECTUALS SEE MORALE COLLAPSE. Now there might be some readers who think that since it is Saigon's troops who are making the successful military moves these days, the collapse of morale can only come in the Communist ranks. Right? Wrong. Here are the first two paragraphs of the story? "Saigon, South Vietnam, July 4—a feeling is growing within South Vietnam's small educated elite that national morale has so collapsed that only a total revolution in the whole social structure offers hope of redemption.

"Such a revolution, some of them say privately, would be possible only under a strong authoritarian government of the type in power in Hanoi. Harsh austerity, rigid enforcement of laws and compulsion to cooperate in rebuilding are viewed as vital."

Wow! Only two pages ago, you thought that a crummy little South Vietnamese advance was going to throw my filly off her stride, but now you have to wonder how the South Vietnamese manage to put one foot in front of the other without stumbling. Here's the *Times*, which in its happier days could bring about the downfall and the eventual assassination of President Diem, an authoritarian of the old school, now devoting all of its non-advertising space on page three to a story calling for an authoritarian regime in South Vietnam. Those who don't know my sweety will say that a news story isn't the same as an editorial, and that we shouldn't allow ourselves to apply to the *Times* opinions of those quoted in its news stories. Shucks, if she were just an ordinary girl I'd agree, but she has this cute way of playing up certain kinds of news stories that just happen to fit into her schemes. The sources for this new demand for authoritarianism are the usual anonymous ones: "a teacher," "a leading Saigon journalist" etc. Just so you don't get the idea that this anonymity is a gimmick, the *Times* gives you the straight inside dope: "A passing remark indicating any sympathy with Communist idea (sic) in this country is sufficient for summary deportation to the penal colony on Conson Island."

Jinkies! A passing remark! And all the passing remark has to do is to indicate sympathy! Wow! When I read tough stuff like this, my *Times* seems so real to me. She looks (in my day-dreams) like one of those tough cookies Joan Crawford played so well in the old movies. There she is, having done in Diem (played by Louis Calhern) for being a dirty old authoritarian, now listening to the tough, embittered intellectual (played by John Garfield) and calling for a dirty new authoritarianism (played by Richard Loo). The fact that the regime in Hanoi is infinitely more brutal than that in Saigon doesn't bother her. She doesn't let herself get bogged down in petty detail. And why should she, if in one article she can combine (a) anti-Thieu sentiment among the intelligentsia, (b) a call for authoritarianism while at the same time stating that the current regime is such a police state that even the *indication* of a remark sympathetic to Communist ideas can lead to the penal colony, (c) a blast at the traffic in Saigon which offends an unnamed professor, his anonymity probably necessary to save him from the vengeance of the motor vehicle inspectors and (d) a chance to drag out all the anti-American feelings the *Times* finds so congenial.

That's my girl and when I get enough money to buy a ring I'm going to pop the question!

On to page four. Remember page one? The South Vietnamese appeared to be doing pretty well, even for a bunch of cowards and fools. Well, the first-page story is continued on page four and my dream-boat is really pouring it on. Enemy pressure is increasing on the outposts of Hue. In the south, An Loc is being shelled by the North Vietnamese. Besides there's little left of An Loc for either side to claim (so much for the thought that the South Vietnamese defense and recapture of An Loc was worthwhile. The North Vietnamese with relatively few men tie down an entire South Vietnamese division. And finally, just so you won't go away glad, the last two paragraphs tell of a bombing strike made by American

(continued on page 22)

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A Symposium:

Politics and the Miracle of Television

Surveying Television

There has recently been no shortage of discussion and controversy (one sometimes suspects there has been more controversy than discussion) about "the media," and specifically about the nature and effect of television's coverage of news. Unfortunately, much of the controversy—ranging from polemic to impressionistic personal opinions to scholarly survey to more polemic—has been marred by at least one of two faults.

Many who have been writing on the question of the bias of television news may have been asking (themselves) the wrong question. They have asked, "Is television news coverage biased?" and then have triumphantly concluded that it is, or that it isn't. This question presupposes, however, that television (or any other medium) could possibly be a neutral medium, that there is such a thing as an entirely neutral or objective form of discourse, that the medium itself does not shape the message. This, in fact, seems unlikely, especially when what is being discussed is "the news." However, the assumption of at least the possible objectivity or neutrality of the medium leads the researcher to say, "Ha ha! Bias! The television reporters, executives, etc. must be biased," and there his investigations stop. Unfortunately, he is stopping short of the really interesting and perhaps important question: "in what way is television news as a medium *'biased,' or in some sense not neutral?" Only by understanding how the very form of television news governs the presentation of the news can we begin to understand the nature and possibly the effects of the "bias" in television news. This is perhaps more common-sensical than it seems: we all know that an event will be described differently in a newspaper, a magazine, a poem, a novel or a television production. The key question then becomes: just how does the very nature of the television news medium, as differentiated perhaps from other news media, affect its presentation of "the news?" How does the medium, and thus, its practitioners, shape the message?*

In addition to asking the wrong question, much of the writing on the media, and on television news, is also marred by a lack of supportive hard empirical data. Or rather, it seems that those who have done good, extensive empirical research on television news have, unfortunately, limited themselves to asserting: yes, television news is biased; while those who have perhaps thought more deeply about the nature of our television news have lacked empirical evidence to support their speculations.

This is not, we must emphasize, to in any way denigrate the work that has been done on the question of bias in television news. Nor is it to claim that we at the Alternative Media Analysis Center have come along and far surpassed, in our report, everything else written on the subject. It is perhaps rather a matter of us standing on the shoulders of those who have come before, hopefully avoiding both of the pitfalls of our predecessors and thus perhaps seeing a little farther than they have seen. That is what we have at least tried to do. The reader (who is invited to order the full report by sending $3.00 to the Alternative Media Analysis Center, R. R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401) may judge whether we have been successful.

Last summer our Media Analysis staff studied video tapes, provided by the Vanderbilt Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University, which dealt with the evening news' coverage of the Democratic presidential primaries (starting in November and running to the New York primary). We wanted to discover the way in which television biases news. Our findings were published in a two hundred page report released in Washington early in October. Below we are publishing excerpts from the two main sections of the report. First is the detailed study of every national television news report on the activities of the Democratic presidential candidates from November 1 through the New York primary. The excerpts are (since they are excerpts they are the somewhat over-simplified) conclusions we reached about the nature of television news' coverage of each candidate. The second, by James R. Ferguson, demonstrates the significance of themes in television news and suggests alternative conceptions which the networks could have considered. The third essay, by Marc Plattner, is excerpted from the main essay of the report, and suggests more general conclusions about the nature and political effects of television news as a medium.

William Kristol

William Kristol is a senior editor of The Alternative *and a student at Harvard.*

James R. Ferguson:

Network Coverage of the Democratic Presidential Candidates

Edmund Muskie

Senator Edmund Muskie's political situation on the eve of the Democratic primary season was defined by television news as that of the "frontrunning" candidate for the party's presidential nomination....But the frontrunner theme as used by television news did not simply provide a means for defining Muskie's position *vis a vis* the other Democratic candidates. It also provided a framework for describing the senator's campaign in an entertaining, even exciting manner. In this regard, television news fully developed the dramatic situation of the frontrunning candidate. He was the man who was leading, but he was also the man who might, at any moment, stumble and fall—the victim of surging rivals, or of his own weaknesses or of both. While network news emphasized Muskie's early superiority, it also probed his campaign for signs of eroding strength, reminded viewers that his eventual triumph was not a certainty and, in the case of New Hampshire provided a formidable opponent (in the frontrunner's "needed" margin of victory) when none could be found among the candidates themselves. In this manner, network coverage of the Muskie campaign in the Democratic primaries became a kind of unfolding drama that focused on one question: can Ed Muskie withstand the challenge of competing candidates and maintain his grasp on the frontrunner's mantle long enough to capture the party nomination?...So television news viewed Muskie's early candidacy with a kind of "let's wait and see" attitude which reflected the two fundamental elements of the frontrunner theme. On the one hand, network news had emphasized the senator's strength and superiority, readily accepting his early endorsements and lead in the polls as evidence of his frontrunning position, while, on the other hand, it had noted that the leading candidate was not without weaknesses and had suggested that his frontrunner status was tenuous at best. In this manner, television news anticipated both a Muskie triumph and a Muskie collapse. And in this manner, television news introduced a note of uncertainty which invested the frontrunner's campaign with an interest for the viewing audience. Can Ed Muskie "make genuine this bandwagon atmosphere" by scoring some impressive primary victories?...So, while Muskie's unchallenged position in New Hampshire precluded the drama of several candidates contending for victory, it also made possible the drama of the frontrunner

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struggling to maintain his commanding lead....it does serve to illustrate by contrast the degree to which a theme may shape and control the content of network news stories. Because Muskie was characterized in New Hampshire as the embattled frontrunner, he left that primary suffering from the ill-effects of what, in any other context, could only be called a clear victory....Within the thematic framework, the Florida primary was not simply an isolated contest, but rather, the second chapter in the unfolding drama of the beleaguered frontrunner.... A major theme that emerged in subsequent network coverage of the Muskie campaign was that of "the former frontrunner"—the candidate who, after having fallen from his preeminent position, was struggling desperately to regain that position. A note of dramatic urgency was introduced by "the former frontrunner" theme, for now, it was not simply Muskie's frontrunner status that was endangered, but his very candidacy:...And in covering his Wisconsin campaign, television news focused on his troubles and difficulties, thus anticipating the final chapter in the fall of the frontrunner:... Had Muskie not been saddled with the largely media-imposed burdens of the frontrunner—had he not, for example, been required to capture fifty per cent of the New Hampshire vote to maintain his "momentum" or do well with the more conservative voters of Florida—he would have most certainly emerged more favorably in television news coverage of the Democratic primaries. And perhaps, if he had had more favorable news coverage, he would have fared better at the polls.

George McGovern

The first important theme that appeared in television coverage of his campaign was that of the underdog in New Hampshire....the scene of the persistent underdog battling from behind to challenge the longtime frontrunner was described with an appropriately dramatic language....McGovern's "upsurge" was measured largely against his lowly position in the early polls. In this sense, then, the game of percentages used by the networks in covering the New Hampshire primary worked to McGovern's advantage....in Wisconsin, polls showed him surging toward the lead....McGovern's "broadened base of support" explained his surge in Wisconsin's pre-primary polls; it also posed a very important question for television news: how had McGovern been able to weld together this coalition of "heretofore contradictory constituencies"? For many newsmen, the answer was to be found in his populist appeal, his anti-establishment stance which fully expressed the discontent of many American voters with "the way things are."...he became symbolic of a social, political and economic disaffection so profound and pervasive that it united hitherto opposing voting groups under the banner of the new populism. Moreover, within the context of the "two George" theme, McGovern reaped the benefits of Wallace's impressive second-place finish. If Wallace, the "right-wing populist," had been linked with the center and right-of-center candidates in Wisconsin (Humphrey, Muskie and Jackson), the sixty per cent vote total would have minimized McGovern's showing considerably... daining the traditional party apparatus, he was appealing to—and working through—the people....Like George Wallace, he was appealing to the common man to express his discontent with "the way things are." So, the candidate, his constituency, his organization, his strategy, his message—all of this seemed to make for a kind of "new politics," many newsmen suggested. And "McGovern and the new politics" became an important theme....Because McGovern's dramatic ascent was, according to the polls at least, continuing in California, television news centered attention on his emerging strengths, his accelerating momentum. So, while Muskie had been an anxious frontrunner, and McGovern a surging underdog in New Hampshire, McGovern became, in coverage of the California campaign, a confident, comfortable frontrunner and Hubert Humphrey a desperate underdog....The "new politics versus old politics" theme was occasionally enlisted by television news to support the "frontrunner-underdog" theme.... McGovern, newsmen said, was making significant inroads in Humphrey's traditional constituencies....many of the themes selected by television news to describe and interpret McGovern's campaign neatly harmonized with his own interpretation of events or his own desired political self-image. In New Hampshire, it was the surging underdog and the percentage interpretation of the primary results. In Florida, it was the minimization of the senator's performance. In Wisconsin, it was the deep currents of social and political disaffection. In California, it was the frontrunner moving with increasing, virtually unstoppable momentum toward the party nomination. In this sense, television coverage of the Democratic primaries was, for Senator McGovern, very favorable indeed.

Hubert Humphrey

Clearly, then, there was a kind of Humphrey model that operated consistently in network coverage of his campaign, a model that was constructed from the events, the impressions, the images of his long political career, and a model that was modified only slightly to accommodate the developments of 1972....For television news, then, Hubert Humphrey was the veteran political warrior who was returning from his 1968 defeat to make a comeback bid in presidential politics, the aged candidate who was hoping to piece together—for one last, great effort—the familiar coalition that had provided so much of his strength in the past. This was the model of Humphrey the politician that operated consistently in network coverage of his 1972 candidacy, and it determined much of the content of that coverage. The most important theme used in television descriptions of the Humphrey campaign—"the traditionalist politician with traditionalist ways"—was derived from it....Clearly, the model defined Humphrey's political situation in the 1972 Democratic primaries very much in terms of his past. It found the drama and the interest of the Humphrey campaign in the Minnesota senator's historic quest for the presidency—the long and dogged pursuit that had become, in 1972, a now-or-never proposition. It emphasized that the senator was still relying on the familiar ways and traditional coalitions of Democratic party politics that had been his style in the past. And it suggested, too, that Humphrey's long political career weighed heavily on his current candidacy—not only the "scars" of Vietnam, Chicago and the loss to Richard Nixon, but also the possibility that he had become too familiar to American voters ....Can Hubert Humphrey realize his lifelong presidential dream by appealing to the past loyalties of his traditional constituencies? Or will his old friends fail him in this one last effort, thinking him to be more a politician of the past than of the present? These were the questions posed by the Humphrey model. They defined his essential task, his dramatic situation, his political image, all of which remained constant as network news charted the fortunes of Hubert Humphrey in the Democratic primary season....The embattled Humphrey's task, then, was to preserve the traditional coalition from the emerging challenge of Wallace on the one side and McGovern on the other....In California Hubert Humphrey was characterized by network news as the underdog, more so, even, than as the traditionalist politician with traditionalist ways...In so far as "the old order politician" theme figured in television coverage of Humphrey's California campaign, it was used to explain the origins of the senator's weakened position. That is, the difficulties of the campaign were attributed by some newsmen to the failure of Humphrey's traditional allies to answer the call of their old friend. McGovern's growing voter appeal, it seemed, was eroding the strength of the old coalition....The underdog theme and the traditional politician theme were used by television news to heighten the dramatic effect of Hubert Humphrey's campaign in the 1972 Democratic primaries. In this sense, they were both used effectively. But they did not make for a balanced assessment of the senator's candidacy. Humphrey's own ideological interpretation of events went farther in this direction. His perception of national issues, his reasoned argument, his positions and proposals did not much concern television news, however. Rather, the network focus was on Humphrey's historic quest for the presidency, his traditional style of party politics, his old friends and old images. There was little in the Humphrey model with its corollary themes to discourage the belief that he was indeed "a politician of the past." And if, as network commentators sometimes noted, Hubert Humphrey had made genuine contributions to American politics, it would seem that he deserved better than that.

George Wallace

George Wallace...seemed to have for television news a clearly-defined image on the eve of the primary season;...The Alabama governor was seen as a regional, one-issue candidate who effectively translated the largely racial fears of white Americans into political support,

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and who, in appealing to the elemental passions of voters, sowed violence and discord wherever he went....If Wallace was a regional, one-issue candidate, then Florida was his region and busing was his issue. Wallace was also, in Florida at least, the frontrunning candidate, and for television news, the one explained the other....The magnitude of Wallace's Florida victory—a forty-two per cent plurality in a field of eleven candidates—suggested that his voter support represented something far larger than a narrowly-defined regional appeal....It was in the aftermath of the Wisconsin primary that the Wallace transformation was completed in network coverage of his campaign. No longer a regional one-issue candidate, he was now an anti-establishment, populist candidate who articulated the political frustration of America's white working class....both Wallace and McGovern had touched, in Wisconsin and elsewhere, a deep vein of restless dissatisfaction within the electorate:... For television news, the governor's appeal was no longer Southern, but populist and anti-establishment. His issue was not simply busing, but the failure of liberal government to respond to the needs of America's "little man."...his campaign assumed a symbolic quality, an instructive value, for network news. That is, for most newsmen, the interest of the Wallace campaign was to be found in what it revealed about the moods and political temperament of the American electorate rather than the governor's efforts toward the party nomination. In this light, he became not so much a candidate for the presidency as a "messenger of discontent," a "symbol of protest," ...in all of Wallace's post-Wisconsin primaries, then, the network focus was on the anti-establishment and populist content of his campaign....The Wallace transformation in television coverage of his campaign—from "regional, one-issue candidate" to "anti-establishment populist"—clearly worked to the governor's advantage. The populist theme was positive, identifying Wallace not with a narrowly-defined constituency of Southern anti-busing voters, but with a deep current of discontent within American society that knew no geographical boundaries and that was confined to no single issue. Because television news viewed that current as a significant political phenomenon to be reckoned with by all of the candidates in the primary season, it also viewed the Wallace campaign as a significant and important political phenomenon. The populist theme seems particularly favorable when compared with a major theme used by television news in covering the governor's 1968 presidential campaign—"Wallace, the sower of violence and discord."

Henry Jackson

The campaign for voter support—perhaps the most superficial expression of democratic politics—is precisely what captures the eye of the television camera. Issues and ideologies are minimized; the candidate's personality, political style and campaign strategy are elevated to positions of primary importance. In Jackson's case, at least, this was unfortunate....So, as characterized by the themes of the network news profiles, then, Henry Jackson was a politician of the old order—traditional and rather colorless in political style, but shrewdly calculating and opportunistic in his pursuit of votes....

John Lindsay

Lindsay, perhaps more than any other candidate, was victimized by the thematic content of television news reports on his candidacy....The mayor's slim chances for the nomination provided the point of departure for almost every network report on his campaign activities....Searching for explanations for the candidate's disappointing primary performance, television news probed the campaign to locate its problems and difficulties, its limitations and failures....the Lindsay of "real-life" was something quite different from the Lindsay of media image. And the "image and reality" theme became less an explanation for Lindsay's unsuccessful ventures into the Democratic primaries than in indictment of the candidate as a kind of deceptive political sorcerer who manipulates appearances with the modern hocus-pocus of media image-building....

Shirley Chisholm

Because she was a black and a woman, and because she freely admitted (unlike Hartke or Yorty) that she did not expect to reach the presidency, Mrs. Chisholm was viewed as an atypical politician whose candidacy represented something more fundamental than a mere effort at political self-advancement....While the other candidates' talk of noble ventures and unselfish commitment was usually interpreted as a deceptive cover for the actual sources of their political behavior, Mrs. Chisholm's self-characterizations and statements of purpose were accepted unquestioningly for the most part by television news....while Mrs. Chisholm was, like Vance Hartke and Sam Yorty, a presidential impossibility, she seemed heroic rather than comic in defying the odds against her... □

James R. Ferguson is a graduate student in history at Indiana University and co-author of The Alternative's *study of television news.*

James R. Ferguson:

A Note on the Newsworthiness of Television News

The themes used by television news in covering the four major candidates of this year's Democratic primary season determined much of the content (and hence, much of the nature) of that coverage. Whether a candidate emerged favorably or unfavorably from network descriptions of his campaign depended largely on how he was characterized by those themes. And in this sense, the failure of television news to provide balanced and equitable coverage of all the candidates flowed largely from what has been called the journalistic as opposed to political) bias of network newsmen — that is, their need to present the news in an entertaining as well as informative manner. (Paul H. Weaver, "Is Television News Biased?" *The Public Interest*, Winter, 1972, p. 67.)

While the network reliance on themes in covering presidential politics goes far in explaining the nature of bias in television news, it also poses another, and perhaps more disturbing question — what kinds of information does television news provide the viewing audience? Clearly, newsmen provide information on the dynamics of the campaign, and in particular, on the positions of the various candidates in relation to their competing rivals. The frontrunner-underdog-dark horse themes are all concerned with this type of news. And occasionally, newsmen provide "information" on what might be called the political personality of the candidate. "Hubert Humphrey, the old line politician" is an example of this type of theme.

But such kinds of information are not — or at least, should not be — useful in the election of men to positions of public authority. Ideally, the citizens of a democratic society measure and evaluate a candidate for office not in terms of his position in the polls or his performance in the primaries, but rather, in terms of his experience, his perception of national needs and his proposals for meeting those needs. This kind of vital information was sadly lacking in television coverage of the Democratic primaries, largely because the themes used by network news focused on campaign strategy and performance, and excluded the more substantive concerns of issues and ideology.

This was nowhere more clearly evident than in the network coverage of the early frontrunner, Edmund Muskie. If Muskie was indeed the early favorite for the Democratic nomination, it would seem that information concerning his perception of national issues would be particularly valuable. And there was much to be said along these lines. The senator's reputation as a cautious politician who carefully weighed all the alternatives before making policy decisions suggests, for example, that his changing views on the Vietnam War were born of a fundamental re-thinking of foreign policy assumptions. And what was Muskie's position on military budget cuts? On a volunteer army? On family planning? On national health insurance? Needless to say, the frontrunner theme did not go very far in answering these questions. Even the CBS introductory profile (which was not a "hard news" story) concerned itself with Muskie's ideology hardly at all, preferring rather to focus on his frontrunner status. Television news' most significant attempts to describe the senator's positions and proposals consisted largely of excerpts from the candi-

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date's speeches in which he responded to such things as President Nixon's Vietnam and busing proposals. The viewer who relied exclusively on television news for information on the presidential politics of 1972 would be hard pressed indeed to comment on the Democratic frontrunner's issue-oriented positions. It would seem that such a viewer could only observe that Muskie was aligned in opposition to Nixon, that he had changed his thinking on Vietnam, that he had adopted a qualified (and in Florida, politically expedient) position in support of busing, that he indulged in "frontrunner platitudes" ("trust Muskie") and that he was a "centrist" ideologue — hardly the kind of information that would make for an intelligent evaluation of the senator's qualifications for the presidency.

Of all the major candidates, Hubert Humphrey was perhaps the most victimized by the networks' proclivity for minimizing experience, issues and ideology. The "old line politician" theme suggested that Humphrey's long career weighed like a political albatross around his neck and largely ignored the possibility that his experience might very well be a political plus for him. After all, Humphrey was experienced in governmental administration at both the urban and the national levels. He had, for more than twenty years, participated actively in the struggle to achieve racial equality. And, as Howard K. Smith and Eric Sevareid noted, he had a record as an imaginative and effective legislator whose name was "writ Hancock-size" on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Peace Corps and Medicaid. But the triumphs of Humphrey's career did not figure prominently in the "traditionalist politican" theme.

Humphrey was also victimized by the networks' penchant for placing issues and ideology within the larger context of campaign strategy and tactics. His issue-oriented attack on George McGovern in the final weeks before the California primary was viewed by television news as a tactical device designed to salvage his failing campaign. Because of this, the substance or content of Humphrey's criticisms were excluded all together from news coverage of the primary, overshadowed entirely by the network focus on the dynamics of the campaign. And it would seem, judging from Senator McGovern's eventual withdrawal of his controversial welfare proposals, for example, that, on some points at least, Humphrey had a solid case that was certainly worthy of public attention.

George McGovern benefited from many of the themes used by network news in covering his campaign, but the accompanying minimization of issues and ideology did not work to his advantage. This was particularly true in the early months of the primary season, when McGovern was characterized as an underdog or dark horse. Because the polls (and hence, television news) defined his position as that of a minor candidate, his views, too, became minor in news coverage of the early primaries. For most newsmen, the senator was, in the beginning, a one-issue, anti-war candidate, and little more. McGovern was strongly opposed to the war, of course, but his views on Vietnam were only one expression of his larger thinking on American foreign policy, and in particular, his estimation of the degree to which military resources are necessary to preserve or advance American interests in international affairs. McGovern's thinking on foreign policy together with his economic philosophy set him apart from many of his Democratic rivals. And, judging from his ready acceptance of Hubert Humphrey's invitation to debate in the California primary, he was as anxious as the Minnesota senator to make clear their ideological differences (and to make clear to the voting public that he was fully within the American political orthodoxy). But the assumptions and arguments which separated McGovern from Humphrey were lost to the viewers of television news. Even in covering the debates, the networks focused, not on the content of McGovern's arguments, but on his strengthened position as the California frontrunner: "As reporters rushed to surround the two candidates after the program last night, you could almost hear the sigh of relief from the McGovern camp coast-to-coast, with their man not only standing, but hardly perspiring. (McGovern remarks) McGovern's strategy, looking more toward Richard Nixon, had been to erase his radical image while avoiding a brawl with Humphrey. He thinks Humphrey is looking desperately for some way to stage an upset..." (CBS, 5-31-72)

The George Wallace ideology was characterized by television news first as Southern, anti-busing and (implicitly, if not explicitly) segregationist, then as a vaguely-defined, anti-government populism. And as described by newsmen, his proposals seemed to be limited to tax relief and to "shut(ting) off every school bus in the country (ABC, 3-17-72). In fact, ABC's Howard K. Smith described the Alabama governor as "planless" (6-7-72). If the Wallace proposals were indeed limited and superficial, they could have been revealed as such when placed next to the reasoned arguments and fully-developed proposals of the other candidates. Such information would constitute an invaluable contribution to American democratic politics. As it was, however, Muskie, Humprey and McGovern seemed in network coverage of their candidacies, almost inarticulate on matters of national concern, and hence, indistinguishable in this respect from the "planless" George Wallace. □

Marc Plattner:

The Networks' Views of the Campaign: A Critical Assessment

Television is, among other things, an instrument of persuasion. And it is clearly in this light that candidates understand it and attempt to use it. They wish to appear on the evening news, and in as favorable a light as possible, in order to win over voters. But from the point of view of the newsmen themselves, who are employed, after all, not by the candidates but by the networks, the role of television news is quite different. To some extent, the TV reporters view themselves simply as another branch of the journalistic profession, whose function it is to inform the people, to give them "the facts." But the nature of the medium in which they work imposes its own set of demands on the electronic journalists and makes television news a very different sort of product from newspaper news. TV news is part of an industry which is devoted to entertainment, and the news programs must compete in the ratings for viewers who watch television primarily to be entertained. These circumstances, together with the TV news form itself, create inevitable pressures for the news to be persented in the most exciting and dramatic possible fashion....

In its effort to describe the events of the political season in an entertaining fashion, network news is aided by its own image of American politics — an image that emphasizes the individualistic and highly competitive nature of the political campaign. This image conceives of American politics as a kind of game played by self-serving politicians, and thus reduces the campaign itself to a competitive "horserace," as Walter Cronkite made clear in reporting on the Florida primary (CBS, 3-14-72):

"This Florida primary tonight is a game of percentages, best illustrated perhaps by that old cliche of the horserace. It is where the seven serious campaigners here finish in the field and by how much they outdistance their immediate rivals that will influence the racing form for the twenty-one other primaries on down the road.

(Cut camera to map of Florida; pennants with candidates' names appear when the candidates are mentioned) "George Wallace is odds-on favorite here; he may be running a race by himself out front. Bunched back there in the pack for second: Washington Senator Scoop Jackson and the two who were 1968 entries, Ed Muskie and Hubert Humphrey. Believed to be further back, a two-horse race for fifth, New York's Mayor John Lindsay and George McGovern. And somewhere on back there, the first black woman candidate for president, Shirley Chisholm.

"This is George Wallace country (camera cuts back to anchor man) and if he isn't several lengths ahead by race's end, the rail birds are going to cluck derisively over his future prospects. Washington's Senator Scoop Jackson, who thought his brand of middle-road conservatism would look good here in Florida until Wallace entered, is now in the race for second place, with longtime frontrunner Edmund Muskie making a

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bid to overcome his disappointingly small margin of victory in New Hampshire last week. And Hubert Humphrey, the old war horse, first time out of the stable this season, determined to prove his legs and stamina are just as good as any of the young beauties. In that race for fifth place, New York's Mayor John Lindsay, making his first bid on this Democratic circuit, and George McGovern, fresh from a showing in New Hampshire that cast doubt on the winter book which had given him virtually no chance at all. He's out here, by beating Lindsay, to put that doubt to rest once and for all, and to have some heavy and smart money on his side in Wisconsin. And Shirley Chisholm — hardly any organization and virtually no money— but making a valient effort to prove a point or two by staying the distance in this tough political race."

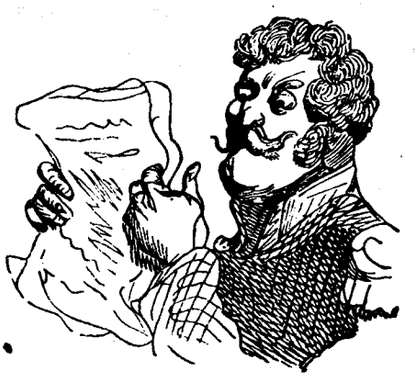
On the day of the Wisconsin primary, CBS again presented a story using this same format. But it was not only on the day of the race that television news used the metaphor of horseracing. The theme of politics as a horserace permeated both the coverage of the individual primary contests, and the reporting of the overall campaign situation.

The Business of Politics

The business of winning and losing is the most obviously exciting aspect of political campaigns, and television news milks it for as much drama as it possibly can. But in these days of ubiquitous and reasonably accurate public opinion polls, the drama of election day itself is considerably reduced. In almost every primary the candidate labled by the newsmen on election eve as the likely winner did in fact gain the victory. But if the opinion polls diminish the excitement of waiting for the votes to be counted, they also provide a means of extending the horserace metaphor to every stage of the campaign. For they enable the newsmen to speak with some confidence about which candidates are moving up in the race and which ones are losing ground.

The nature of the presidential primary route — in which the fruits of victory in any particular contest are usually not very great — further exaggerates the tendency of television news to concentrate upon trends rather than events. Thus the reporters talk not so much about wins and losses, as about "margins of victory," "strong showings," "better than expected performances," and "moral" or "psychological" victories. (The candidates, of course, have also begun to speak in this launguage—when it suits their purposes.) Consequently, more than a few stories on the Democratic primaries told us that one candidate won but lost, and another lost but won. Even some of the newsmen themselves have been struck by the strangeness of this kind of "newspeak" — or perhaps Orwell meant "newsspeak." In a commentary on ABC news on March 13 Howard K. Smith mused about the difficulties of explaining primary results to a hypothetical foreign observer of the American political scene: " 'Then,' he (the observer) said, 'Muskie's chances rose when he won in New Hampshire, yes?' 'No,' I said, 'his chances fell when he won. Those of McGovern who lost, rose.' "

The way a candidate who loses comes out a winner is by picking up "momentum." This term, popularized in recent years by sportscasters, now occupies a prominent place in the political lexicon of their news department colleagues. What is "momentum" in the political context? NBC reporter Jack Perkins, commenting on George McGovern's "strong showing" in the New Hampshire primary, defined it as follows: "Momentum in politics means the money comes in, volunteers start calling, the staff works with a new zeal, the candidate is lifted." This tells us what the effects of momentum are, but nothing about the thing itself. And, indeed, in this case the effects are much more substantial than their cause, which in large part seems to be a mere creature of the imagination. A candidate has momentum when people think he has momentum. The fact that George McGovern obtained thirty-seven per cent



of the vote in New Hampshire may in itself have convinced some people that he had momentum. But the fact that television news said George McGovern had it is likely to have further increased his momentum. All of which points to a more general characteristic of TV reporting of the political horserace: by reporting trends, television tends to magnify those trends.

In the 1972 Democratic primaries the most prominent application of the horserace theme to the race for the nomination as a whole was the "frontrunner" treatment of Edmund Muskie in the early part of the campaign. Muskie's frontrunner standing was weakened in the first primary (New Hampshire), and then lost altogether in the second (Florida). After Florida, no candidate established a clear title to the frontrunner's mantle (although it was occasionally awarded to various candidates in particular news stories) until George McGovern took a commanding lead in the opinion polls in California. But by this point in the campaign, the burdens that often go with the position of frontrunner — his need to achieve a certain "margin of victory" to preserve his momentum — were almost entirely dissipated. As a winner-take-all contest, with a large number of crucial delegates at stake, the California primary, the reporters explained, could not provide "moral victories" to the loser. Then, in the New York primary, where Senator McGovern might otherwise have been exposed to the "perils of the frontrunner," he faced little opposition and was able to win handily. Finally, as the convention itself loomed nearer, the hard reality of delegate votes began to far outweigh any psychological factors connected with primary showings that were "better (or worse) than expected."

Still, one must conclude that the typical effect of television news coverage is to contribute to the difficulties of the frontrunner — especially if he is seen as enjoying a fairly large lead at an early stage of the campaign. For in such an inherently dull horserace, any sign of slippage on the part of the frontrunner or increasing strength on the part of the underdog will immediately be trumpeted by newsmen seeking to inject drama into the campaign. Moreover, to the extent that television reports campaigns as a kind of sporting event, it creates a natural tendency for the fans (at least those who are not partisan rooters for one of the teams involved) to sympathize with the underdog in his struggle to come from behind...

Cynicism and the Wonders of TV

The networks' image of American politics (that is, politics as a game and the campaign as a horserace) formed the basis of the great majority of television news stories about the 1972 Democratic campaign. The contenders were engaged in a horserace for a political prize, and they employed certain strategies and tactics to gain support from various sectors of the population which would move them along the track. Such reporting makes the campaign an exciting and dramatic contest — but it also encourages the view that American elections are little more than a struggle among individuals seeking personal gain and power. And the inevitable consequence of this view is cynicism about the whole political process.

A perfect example of this cynicism occurs in a commentary by Harry Reasoner on ABC (1-4-72). Although Reasoner's tongue is lodged at least partially in his cheek, this commentary is nonetheless quite revealing:

"I was brooding about all the political news today and into my mind popped a recollection of an essay in an Irish newspaper of several years ago proposing for that republic a new form of government in tune with the computer age—a randomocracy. It has its appeal at this stage of an American election year. Roughly it would work this way in the United States. All citizens over a given age who are not in mental hospitals or under sentence for felony would be listed in a computer. There would be no other qualifications of property or education or charisma or even of sex. The computer would then select five hundred of them who would be the Congress, the Supreme Parliament, the Everything for four years. It would — again at com-

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plete random — select one additional name and he would be the president for the same term. The thing is that each of these random selections would, from that moment on, be removed from the normal temptations and frustrations of civil life. He or she would never again be permitted to hold a job in private enterprise or to own stock or to buy speculative real estate or to run for re-election. But each of these legislators, and the president, would be guaranteed a very handsome income for life after the four-year term ended and another randomocracy succeeded them.

"All the temptations of glory and power and riches would be eliminated from political life; all catering to special and sometimes venial interests would become unnecessary; all of the wearying minuetes of election campaigns would stop; and all this without the equally repugnant trappings of authoritarianism or aristrocracy. We might indeed see our parliament become the forum of gold-like guardians which Plato envisaged and which the United States Congress has not really attained. And there is no doubt that such a group would be a reflection of our deepest and most sincere feelings — because the method of selection is exactly that used to determine our most popular television programs.

"There's one problem, but it's parochial: with no campaigns, no announcements, no political scandals, we in news would have a lot of time to fill. We might use it to find out more of what is really going on."

The premise of this statement is that American politics as it is currently practiced is thoroughly corrupt, wholly dominated by selfish men and base motives. But this cynical attitude towards actual politics is intimately connected with an idealistic view of what politics might and should be. The proposal for a "randomocracy" points to the possibility of a politics wholly free from corruption, ruled not by politicians but by ordinary people.

This dialectic of cynicism and moralism characteristic of the newsman's view of politics is made explicit in a remarkable statement by Eric Sevareid (CBS, 1-31-72): "Without moral fervor," Sevareid said, "American politics would be a cynic's game entirely, an historical dead-end." For the most part, television reporting of the Democratic primaries portrayed politics as a game, dominated by self-serving politicians and by special interests. But the newsmen were also on the alert for those manifestations of moral fervor that appeared to challenge the view that politics is merely a cynical game played by the politicians. They were thus naturally disposed to look kindly upon those popular movements which enthusiastically proclaimed their dissatisfaction with "politics as usual." In other words, the cynical view of politics as a game seems to produce as its natural complement a kind of anti-Establishment — one might almost say anti-political — orientation. Perhaps this admittedly speculative suggestion may help to explain the fact that the themes of television news stories tended to reinforce the themes of the "populist" candidates.

Both the cynic's view that politics is merely a game played by self-serving politicians, and its natural complement, the moralist's view that politics can be redeemed by putting power back into the hands of "the people," overlook a fundamental aspect of political life. This lacuna is strickingly illustrated by the Harry Reasoner commentary on "randomocracy" quoted above. The assumption of that commentary appears to be that if only there were no corruption in high places, if only we could have politics without politicians, then all the problems of government would disappear — and so television news would have a lot of time to fill. Yet would not even the most pure and incorruptible and popularly representative public officials continue to face the problems of pollution, poverty, crime, the economy and national security? And do not the men who must deal with these problems require competence as well as zeal and incorruptibility? These questions lead us back to the very reasons why we choose our public officials by elections rather than by lot: to provide the voters with a choice on the issues and an opportunity to select the candidate who, in their opinion, is best able to manage the public's affairs.

TV During the Democratic Primaries

Yet, in the Democratic primaries, the citizen who wished to know what the candidates had to say about the issues and what their qualifications were for high office got very little help from television news. Four of the six leading candidates were United States senators, but viewers learned next to nothing about their legislative records. Nor were they any more informed about the administrative performances of Governor Wallace or Mayor Lindsay.

Indeed, one suspects that, in general, the case for experience is not easily made in the television age, with its stress on personality and its ability to create instant celebrity. The news coverage given to Senator Humphrey indicates that a long and prominent public career may even turn into something of a liability for a candidate. Perhaps we will soon reach the stage when leading political figures are manufactured and used up as fast as a TV series.

Television news does talk about issues; fully 52.8 per cent of television news stories about the campaign mentioned questions of national policy. But a good many of these (71.9 per cent) dealt with the issues only or principally in terms of tactical considerations (e.g., "Wallace is attempting to ride to victory on the busing issue here in Florida."). Among the stories that did not relegate the issues to mere tactical weapons, many devoted only a single sentence to them. Typically, a candidate's views on important matters of public concern would be presented in the briefest possible fashion (e.g., "Vietnam — he wants to get out now;... busing, he's for"). Rarely did viewers have the opportunity to hear a candidate say more than one or two sentences about any issue. And even when one of the networks devoted an entire story to an issue (such as busing), it usually concentrated exclusively upon the questions of which candidates and groups were for it and which against, and how the tide of public opinion was running. There was almost no attempt to present even the most minimal sort of information which might help to clarify the terms of an issue (e.g., on the question of the defense budget, what were the reductions in forces which McGovern's proposed cuts involved?). Nor was there any effort to present the arguments (as opposed to the slogans) employed by spokesmen on different sides of a controversial question.

Now it is true that television is not the medium best suited to a serious presentation of matters of public policy. As our earlier discussion of the television news form indicates, there is a natural tendency for the newsmen to search out and emphasize the dramatic. More important, television news is, in Irving Kristol's words, "the slave of that most superficial and unenlightening of perceptual instruments: the camera." The camera may be able to present "facts" of a certain kind (e.g. delapidated housing), but it is utterly useless when it comes to presenting arguments (e.g. possible policies for attacking the housing problem). And arguments are the essence of political issues.

Some of those men in positions of responsibility at the networks are aware of the weaknesses and limitations of their news shows. In *About Television*, Martin Mayer quotes the following statement by Av Westin, executive producer of the ABC Evening News: "I think television news *is* an illustrated headline service which can function best when it is regarded by its viewers as an important yet fast adjunct to the newspapers. When I read statistics that show sixty per cent of Americans get all or most of their news from television, I shudder. I know what we have to leave out."

But if their product is the chief source of political information for the majority of the American people, don't those who produce television news have an obligation to do more than shudder? The networks could devote more of their coverage to the issues. They could build at least some of their reports around what a candidate is saying about a particular issue, showing either pertinent excerpts from his speeches or filmed interviews with reporters. And they

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could run an occasional general story about a controversial policy question, concentrating upon the most cogent arguments offered on behalf of conflicting points of view.

Such reportage would lack the dramatic character of more typical campaign stories. And it might be argued that it would bore viewers. But it is questionable if TV's attempts to focus on the "dramatic" aspects of the campaign really are all that interesting. The constant films of candidates at airports or shopping center rallies, addressing crowds, talking to supporters and endlessly shaking hands, accompanied by the familiar commentary explaining that candidate X is confident that he is gaining ground or candidate Y is attempting to maintain his hold on his traditional areas of support — viewers may find all this pretty tiresome too. Certainly the newsmen themselves often do, though they blame the repetitiveness of it all on the candidates and the system rather than on their own limited perceptions and the genre of stories they feel compelled to produce. But even if occasional stories on the issues might turn off the viewers, it seems unlikely that regular viewers would turn off their television sets. And the result would be a better informed electorate.

Its failure to provide citizens with the kind of information they need to make an intelligent choice among the candidates constitutes a serious charge against television news. But there is a deeper problem than the errors of omission to which Westin's statement refers — and that is the problem of distortion. We have seen how television news coverage may either reinforce or contradict the message that individual candidates seek to convey. Some "distortion" of this kind is inevitable, given the thematic character of television news stories: there can be no choice of themes that is simply neutral or impartial. But the great danger is that viewers will see the candidate *only* as the newsmen present him.

In most TV news stories the words spoken by the reporter vastly outnumber those spoken by the candidate, and what the viewer sees and hears from the candidate is solely determined by the discretion of the newsmen. The fate of Sam Yorty provides perhaps the most striking example of the kind of coverage that this can produce. Sam Yorty's candidacy was portrayed by the networks as an absurdity. Whether this view was right or not, it seems patently unfair to Yorty that he was almost invariably presented in this light. At the very least, he would seem to have been entitled to an opportunity to present the public with his own view of his candidacy. More generally, the most reasonable safeguard against the dangers of television news distortion would be to give the candidates a greater chance to present their own stories. Occasionally, the networks might even show a film clip of a candidate's speech uninterrupted by reportorial commentary. In this way, at least, the TV audience would have an unfiltered view of the candidates, and thus some basis for evaluating the way the candidate is presented by reporters.

Allowing the candidates more of a chance to present their own stories would also helpt to correct the one-sided view of the electoral process as a whole presented by television news. Politics as a game, the favorite theme of the newsmen, is never a theme of any candidate's campaign. The newsmen will often say a candidate is taking a particular stand on some issue in order to gain votes; a candidate will never say that he is doing this. Obviously, the candidates are sometimes disingenuous in this respect, and it is easy to conclude that they merely indulge in "empty rhetoric," while the newsmen go behind the superficial public proclamations of the politicians and uncover the "inside story;" they tell it as it really is.

Yet one cannot properly understand public life without taking public rhetoric seriously. It is the language of public statements that reveals what politics is truly about, what is really at issue in the political realm. The art of rhetoric in itself may be morally neutral, available both to the deceitful demagogue and the statesman of high purpose. But the universal language of political rhetoric is never morally neutral, because it is determined by the goal of political life. All politicians appeal to justice and to the public interest.

Television news, however, refuses to let the politicians get away with such "rhetoric." It attempts to strip away the "veneer of hypocrisy" to get at the "harsh truth" about American politics. But as we have suggested, the "inside story" may be a more partial and misleading account of the political truth then, the "public story." And, in a free society, it is misleading in a far more dangerous way. For it encourages on the part of the citizens a pervasive cynicism about their political institutions while, at the same time, depriving them of the information that is needed if they are to contend those institutions. □

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An Interview with Edith Efron

Edith Efron is the author of The News Twisters, *a study of network news which argues that in the seven weeks prior to the 1968 presidential election, network news showed a distinctly liberal bias. (See Miro Todorovich's review elsewhere in this issue.) Her most recent book,* How CBS Tried to Kill a Book *(Nash, $7.95), details one network's reaction to* The News Twisters. *A third book, a study of network coverage of the 1972 presidential election is in the works.*

It is widely known that Miss Efron feels television news is dominated by liberals. In the following interview The Alternative *questions her about the underlying reasons for this bias and her suggestions as to how the bias might be eliminated.*

The Alternative: As I understand it, the overall conclusion of *The News Twisters* was, very briefly, that television news had a liberal bias in 1968.

Miss Efron: Right.

The Alternative: Do you think that bias still exists?

Miss Efron: Theoretically, it would exist, but it could be very restrained. A tremendous compensation could be made to try to be more fair. There is some evidence of that, but I'm not prepared to say until I've finished the study I'm doing now.

The Alternative: Why do you think this liberal bias existed in the first place?

Miss Efron: Well, in a general way, I think one of the major reasons is historical. The culture is dominately liberal, has been so for some forty years and has been moving steadily to the left in the intellectual world for that period of time. And journalists tend to come from that world. In addition, in the business of writing it's hard to find good writers, it's hard to find good TV people and they rely heavily on personal recommendations. That increases the likelihood of people of like mind recommending each other. In other words, it didn't start out as a plot against those who did not share their views, but historically and professionally it has ended up with virtually all of them coming from one small portion of the spectrum.

The Alternative: You used the word "plot." Do you think a plot exists today?

Miss Efron: It still isn't a plot. There is an elitist concept that anyone who is an avowed radical or an avowed conservative is definitionally a partisan human being who cannot be objective. There is this weird assumption that only an avowed liberal — if he doesn't wear a button of some kind — is capable of such objectivity. Thus Mr. William Buckley would be considered partisan and Mr. Eric Sevareid, who is a lifelong liberal, is not. This is liberal megalomania. It's totally irrational.

The Alternative: You seem to feel then that the medium is pretty much dominated by liberals and that this distorts the news. How do you think the bias can be removed?

Miss Efron: The only way, theoretically, is to run networks the way you run *TV Guide*, which is to say that you have people from all points of the political spectrum doing your coverage and your interpretation.

The Alternative: And how would this be done in practice? If television news departments are now controlled by an elitist group of liberals who refuse to hire people with opposing viewpoints, how do you make them hire other people?

Miss Efron: You can't. You can't violate the First Amendment.

The Alternative: What's the answer then?

Miss Efron: My answer is to go underneath the reason for which they are in this position of untouchability. And that is, because the government has been

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handing out monopolies the whole broadcast industry has not had its First Amendment rights intact since practically the beginning. Every other medium of communication in the United States works on a privately owned basis — the product is sold on a free market.

It's all pay; it's pay poetry, pay novels, pay newspapers, pay movies, pay theaters, pay everything. And it is totally decentralized, so you don't have anything but individuals selling to individuals. And that is the reason you have the total variety of thoughts and art out on the market. The problem only exists in the one government regulated industry which gives away the ideological and artistic product as a sort of accessory to advertising — as if novels were given away as a side issue with mattresses. It is the government control of broadcasting that causes this.

The Alternative: The argument is though, isn't it, that the government has to be involved in broadcasting because the number of frequencies is limited?

Miss Efron: Well that argument, in principle, was folly to begin with. A great many things are limited. Land is limited. So does that mean that because all the land is bought up in Scarsdale that we should rush out and nationalize Scarsdale? At any rate, as of the present, cable television renders this argument for government control of the frequencies technologically anachronistic. There are now a limitless number of channels.

The Alternative: How can the networks be opened up to diverse opinions? Do you favor selling the airwaves?

Miss Efron: Yes I do.

The Alternative: And what exactly would this do?

Miss Efron: What it would do, simply, is create a free market situation in which ultimately it would reflect the culture such as it is. And better than that we can't ask.

The Alternative: If government would get out of the business of regulating the medium we could sell the airwaves to the highest bidder and with cable television and all the other technological advancements, we would then have a wider spectrum?

Miss Efron: Then presumably television stations would all be catering to whatever audiences they could get, which is no more and no less than other people do in other media.

The Alternative: In this situation would a few influential national networks still get a high proportion of viewership?

Miss Efron: Just the way AP and UPI sell enormous amounts of material. But please notice they are selling to papers that are operating in a free market. They *really* have to be neutral because they just won't get bought if they aren't.

The Alternative: In such a free press situation do you think the liberals would lose their near monopoly of the airwaves?

Miss Efron: Well, definitionally this would knock out monopoly, but they would not lose their dominance of the culture.

The Alternative: Why is this?

Miss Efron: Well, because that is the state of the intellectual culture, and they would still continue to dominate it, and since the Republicans and conservatives who would be the logical ideological competition for them don't particularly invest in intellectual activities and virtually never support their intellectuals, competition would be hard to come by. Practically speaking one would have a free press operating within the culture as it is, and at least the Republicans and conservatives would no longer have anyone but themselves to blame if the thing keeled over against them.

The Alternative: An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* on August 21 suggests this very idea. It says, "To maintain some claim to political power in such times, a dominant party or elite needs to have articulated some vision of the common good — something a party can stand on and stand for beyond its own continuation in office. That this requires intellectual skills is a major reason no such vision is apparent after four years of Republican rule." Do you agree?

Miss Efron: Yes, that is exactly right. Yes, yes it's a tragedy.

The Alternative: So what you are saying then is that if we would open up the airwaves this would give Republicans and conservatives, for example, a better *opportunity* to get their points across, but you don't think it would have any real effect?

Miss Efron: It would give them the opportunity. They would no longer be able to say that broadcasting was legally and politically and economically rigged against their views. But, unless they grasped the opportunity — and they show no inclination of doing this — things wouldn't improve. This bias they complain about is an intellectual and ideological problem. The normal and natural fighters in that realm are intellectuals. Republicans don't appreciate this and unless they put money behind intellectuals and hire them, and support them and nurture them nothing will change.

The Alternative: And you're saying this is the big failure of Republicans and conservatives?

Miss Efron: Yes, and I think that the present situation actually acts as a disguise, because it's very convenient for them to be able to shout that they're victimized, without ever facing the fact that they have fortunes they are not fighting with.

The Alternative: What you're saying, in effect, is that if the liberals were cagey they would come out for selling the airwaves.

Miss Efron: Yes, that's right. If they were really intelligent they would let the airwaves be free and then stand there and grin, because they would have deprived the conservatives and Republicans of a legitimate argument and they would still run the roost. That is exactly right.

The Alternative: You said the underlying problem is that conservatives generally aren't interested in ideas. What about people like Bill Buckley ...

Miss Efron: They're rare you see. They're extremely rare and when they are really sophisticated and articulate as Bill Buckley is or Bill Rusher or James Kilpatrick, then they tend to be grabbed up as tokens.

But the real problem is not that there are no conservative intellectuals. There are, and there are conservative professors from coast to coast, but they're hopelessly abandoned. Rich Republican trustees are financing these universities which are, most of the time, persecuting the conservative professors, squeezing them out. They live like poor orphans. President Nixon gets in the White House and in four years there has never been a Republican intellectual brain trust. Republican or conservative journalists have not immediately been turned into the guys that get the scoops.Whereas the Democrats and the liberals always take care of their own. When you consider who were Mr. Schlesinger, Mr. Commager, and they're just two of a band of historians. They've been turned into bigshots — Galbraith is another — they've been erected into tremendous figures of great significance by Democratic politicians.

Republicans just don't do that. The last four years there could have been a tre-

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mendous collection of brains walking in and out of those White House doors and there would have been a whole group of prominent intellectuals of a contrasting persuasion if Mr. Nixon had simply shed his light upon them, but he didn't do it.

The Alternative: I take it you feel Mr. Nixon isn't unique in this seeming disdain for intellectual battles?

Miss Efron: That's right. I'm also talking about the businessmen who never give Bill Buckley any advertising.. Why is it that *Human Events* and *National Review* and publications of that type are always broke? Why is it that there are many, many rich conservative and right wing foundations, but that tremendous grants to produce intellectual studies that would influence the culture do not come from them. Why is it that only Ford and Rockefeller are pouring out materials influencing the culture artistically, politically and every which way, and the great big conservative and Republican foundations are investing their dough in banks and real estate?

The Alternative: You are saying that Republicans and conservatives tend not to be interested in ideas?

Miss Efron: There is a tendency, and when members of their own group need help — and there are thousands and thousands and thousands, but they would still be in the minority next to the liberals — they don't support them. When you get right down to it, in my own experience, the Republicans and conservatives have expressed great joy with my existence and with my book, but it never occurred to the Republican party to buy 50,000 copies. Books are not something that they deal with. When they think of a powerful man, they think of a big industrialist who could manipulate the materials of the earth in a long range and potent way, and that is power — that's one kind. But they will not look at a broke little intellectual and understand that he contains the ammunition they need for a different kind of battle. I saw a very remarkable example of this when I had dinner with H.L. Hunt. I was curious about just this since Mr. Hunt has limitless fortunes apparently and yet he he puts out something equivalent to a mimeographed sheet. I was wondering why this limitation on the intellectual things that he pushes when he has that kind of money and that was what I questioned him about. For one thing, I might as well have been talking Greek. It was as if he couldn't grasp that there was a more complex dimension open to him. And, at one point in the conversation he boasted to me that there were 125 newspapers which would print his letters to the editor. I said, "But Mr. Hunt, you could buy those papers," and he looked at me as if I had gone mad. It's as if, psychologically, that is not their terrain, that they feel they may not enter and they don't even know why.

The Alternative: In summary you feel the only way to eliminate or offset liberal bias of the media is to first, open the airwaves, and second, to get Republicans and conservatives interested in ideas?

Miss Efron: That's the basic problem or at least to get them to understand that the problem is ideas and to put money behind it. I think opening the airwaves would make things a little better anyway, but maybe most of all it would take way the defense that Republicans and conservatives have which keeps them from acknowledging their own responsibility for the vacuum. □

Book Review:

The News Twisters

by Edith Efron
Nash, $7.95

The Summer of 1968 was not just an interlude in yet another presidential election year. Memories from media-reporting of the Chicago scene were still quite fresh in the minds of those for whom the TV tube is a window towards the outside world. As the political process geared itself for the final days of the pre-election finish, many questioned the even-handedness and quality of campaign coverage. Some lamented the sad state of the art. Others collected interesting horror stories ("Did you SEE last night..."). Edith Efron went them one better: she looked for hard facts before announcing a judgment. The final results of her endeavor are now in book form. Its title, *The News Twisters* aptly summarizes her reported findings.

Her approach was quite simple. Over a period of seven weeks, from September 16 to November 4, she and her associates tape-recorded the prime-time newscasts of the three national TV networks. The tapes were subsequently transcribed yielding some 300,000 words, and this output was analyzed for a selected number of topics related to the campaign in progress. Excerpted stories contained explicit or implicit opinions in the form of direct quotes, paraphrases, narrative reports and editorials. These were collected and tabulated in two basic columns: for or against each particular issue (or person). Finally, Miss Efron added up the numbers of words spoken on both sides of each issue and used the resulting totals as indicators of a possible opinion-induced selectivity by network reporters and editors.

The entire content-analysis aimed at the establishment of an objective measure with which to gauge the degree of compliance of the national TV networks with the so called "Fairness Doctrine." This doctrine, promulgated in 1949 by the Federal Communications Commission requires from broadcasters that they seek and provide "non-partisan," "equal" and "equally forceful" coverage of contrasting opinion on controversial issues. In general it is agreed as a matter of sheer applicability, that every order, statute or doctrine must have an associated criterion, methodological procedure or what have you by which an agency, court, legislator or ordinary citizen can test and ascertain an assumed compliance (or noncompliance). Unfortunately, over the past years, no such analytical method has been devised, and the FCC has no way of checking systematically on the neutrality of the nationwide network news services. Miss Efron noted very succinctly that "in the theoretical void which prevails, the Fairness Doctrine is virtually unenforceable."

In order to fill this vacuum, *The News Twisters* presents not only the conclusions from her investigative endeavors but also supplies a newly developed procedure. It permits for the first time, and in a relatively simple statistical way, an evaluation of the state of affairs within the area supposedly covered and regulated by the Fairness Doctrine. As every "first," her operating model can stand further improvements and refinements; in particular, longer monitoring periods would supply larger statistical samples from which to extract more definitive verdicts. However, even in its present rudimentary form, the EE (Edith Efron) test supplies valid and unimpeachable conclusions which point an accusing finger at the main pillars of the TV industry.

Miss Efron zeroed in with good reason on the TV-segment (and by implication on the radio counterpart) of the general news media: It is this segment which is within the purview of the Fairness Doctrine; the printed word is not.

Historically, the very existence of this doctrine — and of the earlier more restrictive "Mayflower Decision" of the FCC — rests on the fact that the airwaves are considered to be within the public domain. The trustee of this domain, the FCC, was therefore given power early in the game to issue licenses and regulate the operation of licensees. The Fairness Doctrine constitutes one of its regulatory rules and its appropriateness was upheld by the Supreme Court. Justice Byron White wrote that, "Congress need not stand idly by and permit those with licenses to ignore the problems which beset the people or to exclude from the airways anything but their own views of fundamental questions." The press, on the other hand, is not subject to licensing and the First Amendment is presently understood as giving the press the right to be biased.

The above difference in approach was once justifiable because of the numerical abundance of printed materials — newspapers, periodicals and books which guaranteed an even-handed availability of news and of equally forceful opinion if not from a single publication then from the totality of *all* publications. In the case of electronic media, one could, on the other hand, have expected at most only a very limited number of networks with a significant national impact. Any slanting or bias in their news and opinion coverage could then result in a propagandistic rather than informative programming. Thus the Fairness Doctrine.

These fine and yet so far-reaching distinctions which caused a very great difference in the treatment of the airwave and

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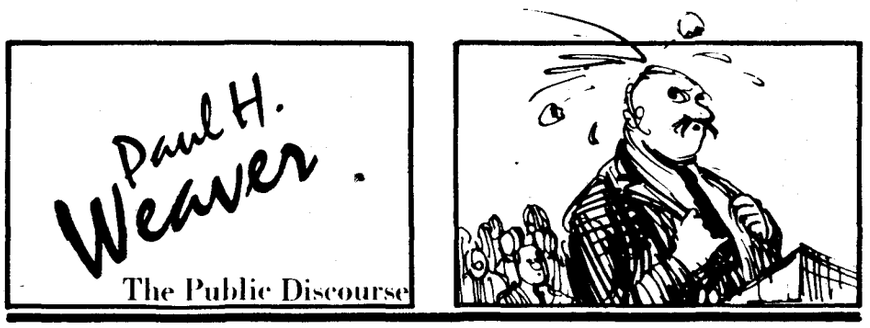
paper media may have by now lost most of their validity. Gone are the golden days of the lone, hardworking, competitive, investigative reporter. Most of the news from foreign lands — stories, quotes, photographs — are supplied to the domestic market by the Associated Press, the United Press International and the New York Times Service. The same is true for the bulk of the non-local domestic news. The number of these main communication channels is now the same, three, as the number of the coast-to-coast TV networks. Simultaneously, the continuous decline in the number of independent newspapers and magazines is bringing the reading public ever closer to the time when it will be at the mercy of the monopolistic power of the surviving few. All this means that selectivity aspects of both television and newspaper journalism are becoming increasingly similar. If one of the media branches needs the Fairness Doctrine to protect the citizens from possible propagandistic aberrations, it is only fair to assume that the other news-disseminating branches are also in need of such a doctrine.

The News Twisters makes extremely interesting and enjoyable reading. Miss Efron, naturally, names names and supplies their transcribed opinion. These are even more interesting when juxtaposed with current pronouncements made by many of the old faces found in the present campaign. Four years have passed from the last presidential race and many things have changed. The U.S. has pulled out of the ground conflict in Indochina and the eighteen-year-olds will be showing up at the polls. The Soviets have been eased out of Egypt while, at home, fiscal matters have captured the attention of the American electorate to a degree unprecedented in recent memory. But one thing has surely not changed: the grip of the TV medium on the supply of news — and opinion — towards the American voter! Will this time the various news-faucets be kept even-handedly open or will the flow be manipulated to produce a biased propagandistic mixture? Edith Efron's book can help everyone come to a personal conclusion.

Miro Todorovich

Miro Todorovich is executive secretary of the University Centers for Rational Alternatives.



The Partisan and the Deliberative

The most important and interesting division in American politics is not that between Left and Right or the New Politics and the Old, but rather the division between the partisan and the deliberative — between those whose instincts tell people to get committed, to take a stand, to do something now!, and those whose first inclination is to wait, take a careful look, search out more evidence, debate the various interpretations and find a comprehensive rational view of the situation before coming to a conclusion or contemplating action. One of the best places to observe these two political styles is in the editorial pages of our leading newspapers. The partisan style, for example, can be followed in *The New York Times* or the *New York Daily News*, while the deliberative style is best exemplified by the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*.

Now each of these styles has its strengths — the deliberative tends to have the virtues of dispassionate reason, such as cogency, balance, precision and caution; whereas the partisan style has the virtue of being an active and consistent political force. But each style also has its characteristic defects, as was recently illustrated by two editorials appearing within days of each other in the *Times* and the *Journal*.

The editorial in the *Times* (September 10) dealt with an important new book about education, *Inequality*, by Christopher Jencks and several of his associates at Harvard. The book reviews what is by now a large body of social science research on the effect of schools upon student achievement and adult income and social position. Its key conclusion is that, within the range of school quality in America today, this effect is negligible. A student who goes to a "good" school does not, on average, learn more, or earn more as an adult, than he would have if he had gone to a "bad" school, and vice versa. What does determine learning and earning is genetic inheritance, family environment, peer environment, personality, effort, luck and many other things — but not schools. From this Jencks concludes that schools are not an effective means of decreasing inequality in American society, that social policy should shift its focus away from the schools and that socialism is the best way to promote equality.

The *Times* did not much like this book. Its editorial began charitably enough, by observing that we tend to have exaggerated expectations of schools and that Jencks had performed a service in reducing them to a more realistic level. The *Times* was prepared to accept his findings about the causes of success in our society and the limitations of schools as an instrument of social reform; these findings, the *Times* said, came "as no surprise." Otherwise, however, the *Times* emphatically rejected Jencks' book and its advice on educational and social reform; and after the first two polite paragraphs, the editorial went heatedly — and none too politely or intelligently — on the attack.

As it happens, there are several good reasons for doubting or rejecting much in Jencks' book. To begin with, it is a crashing *non sequitur* to argue for socialism on the basis of these data: as S. M. Lipset shows in the autumn issue of *The Public Interest*, socialist nations today have about the same degree of inequality as democratic-capitalist nations. What Jencks really wants is not socialism, but a redistribution of wealth and a reduction of the distance between the highest and lowest income levels, and this can be done as easily and effectively in a capitalist system as in a socialist one.

Second, Jencks' data do not show that any or all differences among schools have no effect on student achievement or social mobility; they show only that the kinds and degrees of differences that currently exist among American schools have no such effect. This is a sobering fact, and it should make us skeptical about current proposals for improving schools — but it does not mean that schools can *not* be improved, only that it is very difficult and that we haven't yet figured out how to do it. So Jencks' study does not justify despair over school reform — for the purposes of increasing equality — only great caution, and perhaps also a determined effort to look harder for something that will work. Indeed, his book may even help the cause of those who want effective school reform by showing what *not* to try or what not to pin their hopes on.

Third and most important of all, the data that Jencks uses do not measure equality or inequality of *opportunity* — they measure equality or inequality of *results*. The existence of unequal results does not necessarily imply that there was unequal opportunity, just as the existence of equal opportunity does not necessarily imply that there are going to be equal results. Thus, Jencks' data do show that differences among schools do not affect the *opportunities*, whether taken advantage of or not, that children encounter in our schools. Since the historic promise of the American democracy has been that of equal opportunity, and not equal achievement or talents or social position, Jencks' dismissal of equality-oriented school reform entails a radical re-definition of the American idea of equality, as he himself is candid to admit. If one is not prepared to accept this re-definition, then one should not be too quick to accept his pronouncements on the efficacy or advisability of school reform. There may be many reforms that don't affect the results of schooling, but that do, in fact, affect the opportunities offered by schools.

These three arguments did lurk in the *Times*' critique of Jencks, since they are

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the arguments which best define and justify the *Times'* position in this matter — that socialism isn't necessary or desirable, that schools are valuable and important even if they don't equalize society, that equal opportunity remains the overriding goal of social policy and that improving schools is both possible and desirable. Yet the *Times* alluded to these arguments only indirectly, clumsily and sometimes almost unintelligibly (e. g., "the report ... proceeds on the false premise that there is an inherent contradiction between the belief in equality of opportunity for all and the acknowledgment of great individual differences in competence, aspirations and effort.")

These arguments did not really surface in the editorial because the bulk of the *Times'* effort consisted of an indiscriminate attack on the book as a whole, lock, stock and barrel. The rhetorical offensive proceeded on four fronts. First, there was the *ad hominum* attack: his book "has a serious flaw;" it contains a "dangerous *non sequitur;*" he has "fallen into the standard American trap of putting simplistic tags ... on the elusive ingredients of success and failure;" his policy prescription is "drastic;" his research findings merely "shore up a flawed premise and are not simply a valid guide." Second, there is an argument from what I can only call "positive-thinking piety:" "What is the value in being told that more money has not produced better education, without a hard look at the manner in which it is spent or at the roadblocks in the way of more effective spending?" Third, there is an effort to discredit Jencks politically, by assimilating his position to that of "reactionaries" and "radicals" who hate "the schools," think them irrelevant and are trying to destroy them.

But most shabbily of all, the *Times* also felt constrained to deny the validity of Jencks' research findings. "If the environment contributes importantly to success or failure," it said, "then the schools can be a positive force. If personality or the capacity to grasp an opportunity ... are steps on the ladder, there is no reason why schooling cannot offer a leg up." Now technically, these statements are correct in a way: there isn't in principle any reason why the schools absolutely can *not* be and do these things. But Jencks' research shows that, as a matter of fact, they are not and do not. The only function of the *Times* statements here is to encourage people to avoid or deny these facts.

There is no great mystery why the *Times* proceeded as it did in this case. For one thing, it is still committed to the idea of equal opportunity, while Jencks is not. In the second place, the *Times* is also committed to editorializing in the partisan style. Since it is emphatically in favor of the people and organizations who make up "the schools" and the cause of "school reform," it is automatically against those who, for whatever good or bad reason, might aid the enemies of "school reform." Jencks' findings do not exactly help this cause, so the *Times* attacks.

There is also a more general reason for the *Times'* intellectually sordid performance here. *Times* editorialists are trained in and rewarded for being advocates in the partisan style. They, therefore, neither develop, nor have occasion to use, the skills of making an argument that begins with first principles and proceeds, methodically and coherently, to logical conclusions, that makes sense of a complex body of information, that draws distinctions and identifies contradictions, that preserves a lively sense of the uncertainty of our knowledge and of the difficulty of making public policy. Their forte is instead the passionate assertion and the *ad hominem* attack, and when the facts are at variance with the cause they are committed to, it is more probably the former than the latter which will suffer for it — not as a result of any malign intent or deliberate deception, but rather as a result of an insufficiency of intellectual and expository skills. There was, after all, a way to accept Jencks' facts while rejecting his recommendations; the *Times* did not — I would suggest in fact that it could not — discover how to do it. And rather than proceeding to ignore the book, it chose instead to deny facts, and in the bargain to illustrate a pathology to which the partisan style of discourse is especially prone.

So is the deliberative style of political discussion superior? Well, it does have its virtues, and to my taste they are no where better illustrated than in the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page, which comes as close to the ideal of rational political discourse as any daily publication in America. The *Journal* is always calm and intelligent, quick to get to first principles, alert to the need of making distinctions, mindful of the legitimacy of claims of competing points of view, civilized, thoughtful and never quick to take up a cause, advocate a particular policy proposal or dismiss an idea.

Three days after the *Times* attacked Jencks, the *Journal* published an editorial explaining why it would not — and never does — endorse a presidential candidate. Its reasoning was that the function of an editorial page is to raise the level of public debate, and that "to pin one candidate's name on your lapel" not only doesn't contribute to public debate but can detract from it. Well, maybe, but what, after all, is the purpose of raising the level of discussion if not to improve the conduct of public affairs? And is not the election of a president one of the most important elements of such conduct? If it is, then doesn't the question of whom to elect at least deserve explicit discussion — and if a newspaper should discuss it, shouldn't it also indicate how it resolves the question?

There is in the *Journal's* refusal to endorse a candidate at least a touch of fastidiousness and perhaps even a touch of unseriousness. How else to describe this formulaic refusal to consider the single most political decision, however uninspiring the alternatives, the average citizen makes? This refusal, in the crunch, to consider and make hard grubby choices is, in its way, as grave a political failing as that of the *Times*.

Politics demands both reason and commitment, both deliberation and partisanship. One without the other is absurd and has results that are at best comic, at worst, seriously harmful. The problem for the *Times* and the *Journal* — and for the rest of us as well — is to reconcile the two case by case, from day to day. Such a reconciliation is, in fact, impossible, within the constraints of any single editorial "style." □

Roger Rosenblatt

The Great American Column

Television and Popular Taste

Consider it a given that television is in terrible shape, that among the various instruments of communication, including the telephone, including obscene phone calls, it ranks the lowest, the silliest, the least challenging, entertaining, informative, inspiring, in sum, a zero. Consider it a given, too, that high-minded, culture-hungry, beauty-sensitive people such as you and I always cry out against the blights of the times, trying sincerely if awkwardly to raise the quality of the objects of our perceptions, thereby raising the standards of our perceptions as well. Why then is it that except for faint sniggers such as declaring it an "idiot box" or "chewing gum for the eyes," which are not properly critical remarks anyway, and except for Michael Arlen's *Living Room War*, which stands alone in this regard, we have hardly ever criticized television seriously? Is it because the medium is too shallow to allow for critical penetration, because we do not wish to waste our critical energies on such foolishness or because we do not really want to improve the thing at all?

From one point of view, the one of sanity, it seems astounding that we have tolerated the programs shot at us — not merely the outright abominations like "My Mother the Car," "Gomer Pyle," and "Hogan's Heroes" (yes, it's those lovable laughable Nazis again, kicking their way into your hearts), which in fact are so beyond the expectations of our contempt that they find a sphere

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of art entirely their own, but the "family shows" in particular, the miniature classics such as "The Brady Bunch," "Father Knows Best" (you know, Bud, there are some people who are not as well off as we), and "Family Affair," which are meant to give examples to our lives. In the realm of the supernatural we are offered an assortment of domestic witches and "Night Gallery," the only terrifying element of which being Rod Serling himself, clearly grown mad as a hatter since "Twilight Zone," trying grimly each week to convince us that these episodes are frightening. In the world of crime we are given "Longstreet," a blind insurance investigator, and "Ironside," named for his wheel chair, a partially paralyzed police chief who, at the end of every adventure, is rolled into position by his aides so that he may shoot the criminal personally. I myself am planning a script called "Barker" about a deaf and dumb Doberman with three paws (remember "Tate"?), who is dragged up and down the hills of San Francisco, solving mysteries with his magnificent nose.

Talk shows which are meant to reveal the inner workings of the stars only reveal the inner void. Comedy shows which are meant to make us forget our troubles are so desperate and frenzied that we laugh in order to calm down the participants. Sports programming, which ought to be unimpairable, has been made equally crazy. Hockey and basketball games are thrown completely out of joint in order to fit playing periods into commercial slots. Announcers use great wedges of playing time to advertize future games or other programs on the network. The importance of specific contests is blown way out of proportion, not merely to life, which would at least be forgivable, but to the sport itself. Not that this fact ever discourages Chris Shenkel or Curt Gowdy who are too happy to burden us, or Howard Cossell either, who has built up a remarkable career as television's smart stupid man, a reputation only half deserved. To a man, the sports reporters go on swearing that that game at the season's end, between two last place clubs, played in an empty stadium, with the lights out and the ball deflated, is, in their word, crucial.

On the news, of course, everything is called crucial, which is why nobody trusts the substance of news programs anymore. One of the redeeming features of television is that it has provided a situation where people as unselfconsciously foolish as newscasters can talk without being laughed at, and where one may refer with a straight face to Eric Sevareid's analyses. Charity aside, however, there are very few shows on television as ridiculous as the news (unless you count as shows the recent TV editorials which fearlessly cry out against pickpockets and poison oak). It has been explained that it is the dramatic construction of news programs which sets up their evident biases; but the sadder truth is the naive and facile conception of drama, particularly of tragedy and heroism, that news people have. In the long run, it matters very little that a man shows biases if he also has no judgment. Eventually, as political candidates discover, the biases factor out.

Briefly, what makes all of these shows—news, sports and regular programming—so offensive is their attempt to create a brand of realism by destroying our own sense of reality. Ordinarily this effort might not be deemed an offense because in one way or another everything that pretends to realism attempts to destroy our sense of reality, and does so, as television does, by substituting its own. What is called "realistic" in literature is always much harsher and tougher than what we recognize as real life, and the "realistic" decisions we are occasionally asked to make are inevitably the ones which disfavor us in ways which constrict or belittle our very real imaginations. In television, however, realism represents neither the excessively harsh nor the excessively practical. It is our crises, the points of our highest intensity, which television calls real, and it seeks to obliterate our own sense of what is real by bombarding us with continuous and undiscriminated excitements until we are unable to tell the exciting (game, person, dramatic moment, news item) from the

boring, the important from the trivial, and ultimately until we are unable to tell what is happening at all.

The most outrageous show on television, for example, and one of the most popular, is also the most sinister, in just this way. The program is a quiz show called "Let's Make a Deal" which has to be seen to be believed. Its audience is divided into two sections. There is the regular audience, and in front of it, in a roped off portion, is the participating audience, would-be contestants who have come dressed as animals or inane allegories or in other outlandish costumes, and who forcefully vie for the attention of the master of ceremonies. The master of ceremonies patrols the aisle up and down, choosing players at random. Only a few can participate, therefore every person in costume continually screams and flails his arms in order to attract the emcee as he makes his selections. Those whom he chooses to "deal" with can barely contain their excitement. Some have to be forcibly quieted before the show can continue.

What the master of ceremonies offers these people is a choice between unknowns. He tells somebody dressed as Mother Goose, for instance, that he may have whatever is in this box (which a professionally bemused assistant produces) or whatever is behind that curtain (to be drawn apart by a long-legged girl). The contestant is baffled, but he chooses the box. Before he has the chance to open it, however, the master of ceremonies says, I'll give you five hundred dollars for whatever is in that box. The contestant hesitates. Six hundred. The regular audience shouts, "keep it," "sell." Seven-fifty. The contestant decides to keep the box. When the lid is lifted there may be jewelry on display worth two thousand dollars, and the contestant shrieks in delight. If the contestant is a woman, she flings her arms around the emcee's neck and kisses him powerfully. A man usually jumps up and down like a great cartoon frog. Or, there may be a sandwich in the box, whereupon everybody guffaws and the contestant collapses in disappointment. Sometimes, there is a live animal behind one of the curtains, and, as the audience howls, a look of genuine terror comes into the contestant's eyes as he or she not only deals with the despair of losing, but with the possibility of taking home a pig or a mule.

The excitement of the show derives not from the price or size of the prizes available, but from the act of depriving people of their ability to make informed decisions, in other words, to reason. To deprive them of their sanity at the outset, the show's producers insist that the contestants disguise their actual identities in order to qualify for losing their reason. When the "deals" are presented there is nothing for these people to go on but bare intuition, tortured and prodded by the rest of the audience shouting "the curtain," "the box," "the money." In the center of this uproar, controlling it all, is the master of ceremonies, offering people money for things which they cannot know the value of, things which they cannot see, distributing punishments and rewards as capriciously as the Devil he is.

There is a faction of TV knowables who, upon hearing this description, will tell us that yes, modern television programming is indeed a disgrace, but ah, you should have seen the old days. And it is true that the old days could boast of Sid Cesar, the "United States Steel Hour," "Playhouse 90," "Studio One," the "Hallmark Hall of Fame" and "Producers' Showcase," all of which by now are so legendary in their prominence that their stature only comments on the arena of comparison. It helps to remember, too, that the old days could also boast of "My Little Margie," "Winky Dink and You," "Filbert the Flea," and "The Stu Erwin Show," and did, and that Robert Young, the grand old man, indeed the male muse of television, who knew best in the 1950s is still curing our fatal diseases. "Let's Make a Deal" represents a twist on television's former successes, "Strike It Rich" and "Queen for a Day" in that instead of having cripples as contestants, it makes cripples of them, but the early shows operated on the same sadistic impulse, and all three are part of the same general disaster.

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Still, the question is not whether television is bad, or what makes it bad, but why we take it. And the answer, I think, is that we do not simply take it, but that we actively like it, and that we like it as it is. Television is not theater. We know that fact not by the paucity of plays telecast, but by our own observation that most of the plays that are telecast are so dreary and lifeless. People will always prefer good melodrama to bad drama, which is one reason why educational television, with its atmosphere of silver plate and heavy linen, fails so solidly. Television is not movies. The only movies that do not lose their grandeur when reduced to the size of a television set are those that had no grandeur in the first place. Television is what it is: a household appliance, a gabby cousin, a series of pictures, a killer of time — all these things. But it is not a medium for art and great thoughts, and we know it, and we make no complaint.

Whether this reluctance to criticize on our part in turn raises the question of our wanting any art at all, I don't know. Surely there seems in most of us most of the time little patience or eagerness for what we recognize and even admire as high culture. Is it merely because we are not built to sustain a pitch of receptivity equal to the art object or event itself, is it a matter of stamina? Or do we fall back on, and more often reach out for, the low culture, the melodramatic and silly and shallow, because in that low culture we dimly perceive a truth about our nature: that we are not the advancing social animals we have forever told ourselves we are, and that the proof of our delusion lies in the fact that, despite a number of sublime interruptions, we remain steadfastly cliche-ridden, dull, silly, melodramatic, loosely-constructed and not noble? In plainer terms, do we seek the low ground in our culture because that is where we seriously and deeply live?

Of course there may be nothing more to this than the discovery of yet another form of our determined and resilient laziness. But if there is a glimmer of truth here, we better catch it. Television has lived with us comfortably and compatibly for twenty-five years. It has rescheduled our evenings, rearranged our furniture, readjusted our eyesight and otherwise occupied our existence like no other machine of our invention. At the same time we have recognized it as the greatest banality of our invention, and we have encouraged its domination of our days. It may be that we have at last found a machine that we are superior to, and therefore keep it around for self-aggrandizement. It may be too, however, that in it we have hit upon the true level of our magnanimity and grace, a level which we outwardly deny and occasionally transcend, but which we nevertheless seek willingly like gropers in the dark, reaching out for the dial, creating the national click. Uncle Miltie's theme song was "Near You." How close did he actually come? □

John Ashmead:

The Language of Movies and Kubrick's Clockwork Orange

From talking to a good many audiences about linguistic analysis of films, I have concluded my best tactic is The Outflank. As many outrangeous propositions as possible! And damn the torpedoes, Gridley!

First, a non-proposition. When I talk of the language of movies, I don't mean that film is a *language*—one which we learn in much the same way we learn a foreign language. There is no audio-visual filmic literacy, and no audio-visual illiteracy either and we don't need the aid of audio-visual fakirs, pedagogical or critical, as we chomp our popcorn at the flics.

Quite the opposite. And my first proposition is that each film of any originality — let's take the *Clockwork Orange* — is in a *unique* language (I mean unique to itself) which for some mysterious and fascinating reason we are able to read almost instantly without any special difficulty. Here, a slight gearshift of terminology, please. Since *language* in English has several different senses, ranging from de Saussure's *Language (langue)* to *Speech (parole)* let's talk from now on about the code, or rather the codes of our movie, for we're dealing not with one code, but a plurality of codes in each film.

For instance. The code of the camera — long shot, middle shot, closeup, big closeup; deep focus, shallow focus; overhead diffused lighting and so-called natural, chiaroscuro lighting; camera angle shooting up, camera angle shooting down. In Murnau's *Last Laugh*, shooting up at the doorman when he's still doorman, shooting down at the ex-doorman when he's cleaning urinals. In Welles's *Magnificent Ambersons*, shooting up and down their magnificient staircase. In Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*, shooting up at Alex when he's about to rape the writer Alexander's wife, shooting down at Alex — between a nearly nude actress's bosoms (what panache!) — when he's been psychologically raped into impotence. Decode as — social superiority, aesthetic counterpoint to verbal battling, ravisher and ravished. What kind of coding is this, where without any great bother to the audience, the meaning of the coding changes from film to film?

A tantalizing first corollary to my first proposition. Noam Chomsky has made it clear to us: *we have badly underestimated the complexity of human linguistic codes*. No way, at least no behaviorist way, by which we could have learned our linguistic code by the age of five or six, unless we assume innate ability, or imprinting which makes that almost infinite learning possible. But aren't movies, with their bundles of unique codes, in some ways even more complex? When I saw audiences at the Montreal Expo watch the then new split screen techniques — or codes — so far as I could tell not one person of the hundreds around me had any problem in learning these codes. The astonishing thing then, about movie codes of all kinds, is not their rapid growth in the short span of seventy-five years, but the comparative ease with which audiences all over the world have learned these codes.

And a second corollary to my first proposition, a corollary which I hope is self-evident. *To see a film is to discover the unique rules of its codes.*

Now for my second proposition. With a digression on indebtedness. To some extent, I start from the linguistics, the *glossematics* of the Danish linguist, Hjelmslev. More, much more, from the French periodical *Communications* and its principal editor Roland Barthes. And even more, for this proposition, from the pioneering work of Christian Metz.

As Prop Two — each film has as one axis a *denotative code*, a succesive chain of about eight different kinds of Minimal Filmic Units (MFU). These eight MFU's serve to set forth the plot, what the French call the diegesis, the simplest narrative axis of the film.

Film directors show a surprisingly individual use of these. Even the denotative code has its stylistics. A Mack Sennett comedy of the Keystone Cops variety often specializes in the MFU called an *alternating syntagma*, one in which the camera cuts back and forth from pursuing cops to fleeing husband-motorist. Note that to have our minimal flimic unit we have to have both cops and motorists — we read them as occupying simultaneous time slots. A Tom Mix film, on the other hand, uses alternating syntagmas in combination with *descriptive syntagmas*, panning shots of Tony the Wonder Horse and his Rocky Mountains. A Pabst film, *Joyless Street* is rich in *parallel syntagmas*, contrasting shots of the lives of poor people and wealthy people. *Cabaret* stresses such parallel syntagmas to intercut decadent nightclubbing homosexuals with Nazi stormtroopers beating up Jews.

Clockwork Orange is predominantly scenic, that is, the majority of its MFU's are like stage *scenes*, with interspersed *autonomous shots*, shots which interrupt the narrative flow, to show dreams, flashbacks, recollections. There are a few *ordinary sequences*, MFU's in which dull or unnecessary bits of action are omitted, as in the hogs-of-the-road auto drive. Such ordinary sequences, by the way, are a dominant part of almost any Douglas Fairbanks adventure — *Robin Hood*, *The Mark of Zorro* and the like — and give these films their breathless quality.

In general, Sci-fi flicks, the basic genre of *Clockwork Orange*, have a lot to explain, and they rely on scenes. But the theatrical *scenic* quality of *Clockwork Orange* is not to be so easily accounted for. Three of the scenes are set in theaters: the gang duel, the first conditioning of Alex, the demonstration that he is in fact conditioned against sex,

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violence and Beethoven. Often we have backlighted sequences, not just a stylistic trick, as some reviewers suggested, but as though we were actors looking across footlights. And we have a surprising number of corridor scenes, again no mere mannerism, but a strong hint of entering a stage from the wings. There is then a theatrical, role-playing quality to this denotative code. To understand that point more deeply, we need a third proposition.

And with Prop Three, in my view, we can perhaps see why potentially at least, Hjelmslevian linguistics is more attractive to the student of culture than either structural linguistics or transformational generative linguistics. *Intersecting our denotative code and its successive chain of MFU's we argue a series of connotative codes of various kinds.* Much of my own recent work has been to try to impose a little more system on this chaos of connotative codes. But here let's only mention some of the more obvious connotative codes whose axis intersects the axis of the denotative code. We have the Church of England code of the Anglican father; the liberal code of the writer Alexander (which by the way doesn't keep him from driving Alex the gangster to an attempt at suicide, partly out of revenge, and partly to secure a political victory over the party in power); an age code (the tramps) and a youth code (Alex and his droogs and teeny boppers); a gang warfare code (Alex and Billyboy); a costume, decoration and makeup code along pop art lines; a sex code (stress on male and to a lesser extent female phallic symbols); the tough policeman's code (the warder, and Alex's former companions turned cop).

Roman Jakobson was the first, I believe, to notice that some films stress what I have called the denotative code, the filmic diegesis or succession of MFU's. Such stress, as in the films of Griffith, gives a great emphasis to metonymy and relies on what I have called autonomous shots, that is inserted dreams and flashbacks. Other films, such as those of Eisenstein or Chaplin, stress the connotative axis; these are predominantly metaphorical, as in a Chaplin dissolve in *Gold Rush* in which his partner sees him as an edible bird. T o read *Clockwork Orange* we must then be keenly aware of *metonyms*. But before we come to those, how is it or what is it that enables us to connect the denotative axis with the connotative axis? By way of rough hypothesis, let's conceive of a shifter, a *metaphor metonym* which links the two planes.

The most economical way to locate a dominant shifter is to go to a crucial scene, what the old school texts used to call a turning point. In *Clockwork Orange* this takes place in the lobby of Alex's apartment. Note the minor metonym of the damaged elevator, the damaged technology, of the new socialist state. And the damaged art, for the socialist realist wall painting of happy workers has been ballooned into significant phallic graffiti — "If it moves, kiss it" — "Suck me and see." And the brassiere, reminder of a fleeting rape.

Alex has just come from a drug-orgy group grope or possibly rape, which followed his orgasm-masturbation to the music of Beethoven's Ninth, which in turn followed his rape-beating of the wife of the writer Alexander. His next major crime will be the killing of the cat lady with a penis statue, as she tries to defend herself with a bust of Beethoven. The camera angle shifts from up to down, following the psychological reversals of his relationship with his rebellious gang, they are against him because he disciplined Dim by hitting him in the crotch (that kind of blow is not in the novel, by the way). The three gang members lounge in the broken furniture, codpieces conspicuously protruding. At the decisive point in their argument, Alex sits on Dim's lap, his codpiece butting against that of Dim, in a strikingly homosexual posture. At once, metonymy — the part for the whole, one concept for another, the sceptre for the king — we recall the whole scene, in which — curious posture! — Dim had held the writer Alexander's wife *standing* in front of him, so that Alex could penetrate and ravish her. (Warning — we are about to have a substition of an R or restricted version of *Clorkwork Orange* in which several of the more obvious scenes will be toned down.) "Viddy well," says Alex to the bound and gagged husband — "Watch well." What kind of sex act is this, which must be performed before other men, and indeed towards one of one's own gang? And to the accompaniment of great violence, which cripples the writer Alexander?

Are we perhaps being told of connotative code which interrelates homosexuality and gang violence? Are we to go further, in our decoding of *Clockwork Orange* and read this theatrical scene (as so often in Kubrick's scenes *in this movie* the camera occupies a fixed position, orchestra third row center) as *role playing* of a dangerous kind, on the surface highly masculine, under the surface homosexual and sadistic? Can we speculate even further, that a good deal of the violence of America (and this is an American film for all its British dress — note the stress on blows to the crotch, four of them, as against one in the novel —) is rooted in this covert homosexuality. A repressed homosexuality which finds overt expression on the one hand in *Playboy*, on the other in Mylai?

On to Prop Four. The dominant theory of movie making today is the *auteur* theory, that the director is the creator of the movie. But linguistic analysis of movies is not going to support that theory. And it is no accident that in my conversations with teachers and critics of the *auteur* persuasion, I find that they dislike the linguistic approach. Come back to one of our starting riddles. Why is it so easy for audiences to understand these bundles of unique codes we call movies? Why don't we have (I am speaking of the usual kinds of movies and not of short experimental films) more resistance than we do, of the kind that is still a major part of the anti-reception of a novel such as Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake?*

Clockwork Orange is a good example. A movie is usually the creation of at least five, sometimes six or more, often warring linguistic factions. The director, yes. But also the cameraman (or lighting cameraman). The script writer. The editor. And the actor. *Singing in the Rain* was the contribution of Alex, the actor

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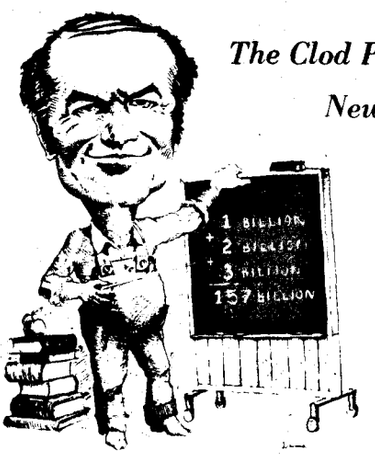

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The Bootblack Stand

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at *avant-garde* bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled *What's in It for Me?* Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

My name is Billy Joe Klegg and I am the presidential candidate for the Presidency of the United States of America on the Loyal U.S.A. party. I, "the poor boy with the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt," am called Billy the Kid, though it is only a nickname and my real name is Billy Joe Klegg. I believe that I shall be the next president of the United States, and I have travelled over fifty thousand miles to bring word of my candidacy to everyone. I have overcome great obstacles, for I am an anti-establishment candidate — a shaker-upper-of-the-system — who knows the Establishment is as red as Kosygin's long johns. Twice my official 1952 Chevrolet has busted a radiator and once one of Nixon's agents took polaroid pictures of me in front of the A&P delivering an address with my shirt off. Hippy dope freaks often harass me and one stuck pins in the head of my campaign teddy bear, while I took a breather at Country Slim's All Night Truck Stop in Ferret, Arkansas — my national headquarters.

Obviously my safety is in danger, yet Mr. Nixon has consistently refused to give me Secret Service protection. This hurts my campaign because until I get more security, I must continue to keep my schedule confidential and how can I turn out the big crowds when no one knows I'm coming? What can I do?

Patriotically,
Billy Joe Klegg

Dear Billy Joe:

Drat! Isn't that just like the Nixon Administration! First the Watergate Caper and now this. I suggest you ask George McGovern for one of his Secret Service agents. From the way his campaign is going, it doesn't really seem that he needs all that much protection.

—GWP

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

I am in desperate need of assistance. Let me tell you the truth. I cannot stand my knob-headed running mate, George McGovern. He insists that I work mornings and has refused to let me go to the dog shows. When he plays tennis he perspires repulsively, and I am heartbroken over the way he dresses. His suits look like he got them at Walgreen's; he wears clip on ties. His table manners are inhuman. Last week he tried to eat his vichyssoise with a knife and fork. His wife drinks Bourbon and Cola in public. Several days ago I arranged a big fund raising meeting at his quarters. When I arrived with Auntie and Unkey-Pooh he met us in his swimming trunks, made a tasteless joke about belching and insisted we all sit around his television set and watch the Roller Derby while he soaked his teeth in a glass of something his wife brought up from the basement. Now he wants to dine with me down at the Club. I shall be mortified. What can I do?

Cordially,
Sargent Shriver, B.A.

Dear Mr. Shriver:

I am familiar with your predicament. It was not long ago that Tom Eagleton was writing me about just this kind of thing. It is not easy to run with a man like Senator McGovern, but then think of all those poor fellows who had to endure the late Bryan. Unfortunately, there are not any alibis left. You are going to have to go through with it. But, if you find it any consolation, your association with him should not last beyond November 7.

— GWP

Malcolm McDowell.) Is it perhaps the linguistic, the coding battle among these five or so which ensures that the code will have some possibility of being readily decodable?

Clockwork Orange, a beautifully complex movie, adds to the five above the music, highly original, of Walter Carlos. This music has a codal life of its own. For the starting point of the gang rebellion and the crucial scene we analyzed above was an act of disrespect to Beethoven. And the conclusion of the film shows the hero once more able to have an organsm while listening to Beethoven, and imagining violent public, homosexual sex. Beethoven is a *metonym* for classical art. Even this art, in this kind of society, the *Clockwork Orange* warns us, becomes an art of masturbation. Far more than the relatively trivial argument about freedom and conditioning, this is the musically encoded warning of *Clockwork Orange*. Once great art is perverted, in a drug and record culture, the perversion of freedom and education cannot be far behind. Viddy well, my droogs!

John Ashmead is a professor of English at Haverford.

AVEY

(continued from page 7)

planes on supply barges supplying a freighter. Pro-American story, right? Uh-uh. *The freighter could not be identified because of darkness!* Get it? We might have hit a peace-loving Liberian freighter or even, gulp, a Chinese one, because we bomb in the dark. Goddam it, Errol Flynn didn't bomb in the dark. We didn't defeat Helmut Dantine and all the rest of that crew by bombing defensless freighters in the dark. Stop this terrible after-dark bombing! Cease this nocturnal savagery! Put a halt...

Sorry, Diary, I got carried away. When the *Times* lights my fire, I just don't know what I'm saying.

I love her because she's so blunt. On page five between ads for Bergdorf Goodman and Macys there is a poignant headline: VIETCONG ASSERT A SERIOUS REPLY BY NIXON COULD HAVE ENDED THE WAR. Curse you, Dick Nixon and your frivolous replies!

I love her because she is even-handed. On page eight there are but two stories, a big one and a little one. The big one carries this headline: POLISH-EAST GERMAN TOURISM BOOMING UNDER OPEN BORDER PLAN. Hoorah for open-border plans of the peoples' democratic socialist republics! The other headline tells a different tale: BRAZIL WILL RETAIN CURBS ON LIBERTIES. Boo to liberty-curbing Brazil. Boo. Hissss. Get the picture? East Germany and Poland are "open-border" countries and Brazil...well, Brazil is just *awful!*

I love her most of all because she's cute. She just has a way of saying things that completely win my heart. Take her editorials. She has one today in which the following sentence appears: "We believe that the integrated school, even if it produced no educational gains, must be the goal of a free society." Perfect. Beautiful. "Even if it produces no educational gains..." Has anyone ever put it so neatly or so sweetly? Integration for integration's sake. Integration hits the spot even if it costs a lot. School integration, which most scholarly evidence shows can come about only through the use of force, is a "goal" for a "free society!" That's my girl.

Well Diary, 'nuff said for tonight. I can't wait until I see her again tomorrow. She'll be there, as she always is, with the wind blowing through her prejudices, waiting for me (played by Freddie Bartholomew or maybe even Jimmy Lydon). They all tell me that I'm too young, that this is just a teen-age crush. But I don't care. Good night sweet-heart... □

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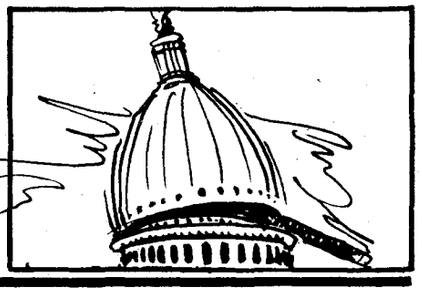
C. Bascom Slemp

Letter from a Whig



Another Tall Tale

One of the unpleasant aspects of this world of modern mass communication is that, when nothing is going on a lot of people go hungry, so it is that the mass communications boys have got to talk as though something is going on even when all is deadly dull. It keeps bread on the table and beer in the bucket. Thus in this election year as the Republican candidate reposes on the front porch and the Democratic candidate makes a windy hind of himself, the media boys have had to confect a little suspense, keeping some Americans from falling asleep and others from dying of laughing fits. The suspense-packed issue that they have whipped up this month is called the "possibility of a coattail effect." Supposedly, as this dreary campaign slumps along Americans are to sit on the edges of their chairs, wringing their hands over the perplexing question of just how many congressmen and senators of the Republican variety Mr. Nixon will bring into office with him.

Of course, the Democrats should not worry too much based merely on the evidence of numbers. The numbers favor them. The Republicans need thirty-nine accretions in the House and five in the Senate (this would tie things up in the Senate, allowing Mr. Agnew to tip the balance for the GOP). Such an accomplishment would, obviously, demand a pretty potent coattail, for only fourteen of the thirty-three Senate seats at stake now belong to Democrats.

But, nevertheless, according to the pundits, Mr. Nixon's lead is now so shattering that the rest of his campaign just has to be history making and that means something like a complete reversal of roles in Congress. Phooey and blah! I no more expect to see a legislature filled with Republicans, next term, than a legislature filled with vegetarians. As recent scholarship has shown, an increasing number of discriminating Americans are voting a split ticket. Further, the great boon of redistricting that was once expected to usher in an era of matchless democratic precision has actually encouraged incumbents to protect themselves in each new round of redistricting. Finally, and most important of all, the philosophical substance of our parties no longer makes much impression on an individual voter. Certainly the Republican Party no longer can be called a party of fixed principles, for what *does* the typical Republican promise that differs from a run of the mill Democrat? When a party no longer embraces a set of identifiable or comprehensible principles that deeply touch the needs of men, there just is no reason for men to identify strongly with a political party. Today's political parties do not address themselves to the personal and enduring needs of the citizens. And so long as this is the case citizens will not identify themselves deeply with the party.

Now, in the political era just passed people did identify strongly with the Republicans or with the Democrats, and those people who survived from that era will continue sedulously to vote for their respective party, as Everett Ladd and Charles Hadley have so convincingly agrued in *The Public Interest* (Spring, 1971). But younger voters will not be so easily regimented behind a party. For it means no more today to be a Republican than to be a supporter of the Chicago Bears. To support the Bears is merely to carry an enthusiasm — admittedly a pretty bizarre enthusiasm — and it goes no deeper. So it is with Republicanism.

I believe the make up of the next legislature will be about the same as it is at present. There is only one occurrence that might interfere with my conclusion. If two or more Senate seats fall to Republicans, Mr. Byrd and one or more of his colleagues from the south might cross over to the Republican side causing Republican domination in that chamber. This is an outside chance and unlikely. Thus the big story of the month is not much of a story after all, and next year we can expect to see President Nixon struggling again with his unwieldy and un-productive alliance in a relatively unchanged legislature. □

David Brudnoy:

Black Mischief

From Stepin Fetchit to *Slaughter* (" Jim Brown is Another Black Superman!" blares the *New York Daily News*): Progress. The Negro has been discovered as human being. He has his new filmic heroes. He rises to mythic heights of Identity. To equality through separatism. To Power. *The Man* is Black. *Melinda* is — well see her, starring Calvin Lockhart and Rosalind Cash. *Superfly* is oh my. *Blacula* sucks blood. Soul blood.

Go back, back, way back to early movies, to those medieval times when Negroes were ill-served by carpetbaggers and scallawags *a la* Hollywood (Birth *of a Nation.)* To the travesty-stereotypes of Negro lethargy, bumbling (Jack Benny's Rochester), cringing ("Feets, if you's ever served me, serve me now!" — the terrified Negro servant to Charlie Chan), smiling, grinning servility ("Aw, Miss Lou, ah don' mind staying 'round to help *you*" — the Negro maid to Mae West in *She Done Him Wrong*, mindless stupidity ("I don' know nothin' 'bout birthin' babies, Miss Scarlett" — Butterfly McQueen as Prissy to Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind)*, venality, natural rhythm. An undeniably sad record of misrepresentation, distortion, prejudice-confirming portrayal of colored people in the American film.

Then the gradual opening up, broadening, humanizing in the 1950s and 1960s — Harry Belafonte, Satchmo, Dorothy Dandridge and above all, Sidney Poitier: superspade, the Negro better than most Caucasians, oh-so-sympathetic friend of the young blind white girl in *A Patch of Blue*, devilishly clever cop in *They Call Me Mister Tibbs*, super-brainy son-in-law-to-be in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and on and on. An abysmal half-century of misuse at the hands of the film industry superseded by an evolved generation of fanciful, albeit complementary, glorification at the de-prejudiced hands of the same film industry. On balance I prefer the sanitized, romanticized, deodorized Negro of yesterday's film to the grossly maligned nigger of long ago. But each twisted reality, though so do most films.

Granted, within the past ten years or so, American movies have done somewhat better with Negroes in *peripheral* roles. An attempt at "fairness" in films marched apace with the same trend on television: with an almost embarrassing fealty to the aim of putting at least one Negro into every TV program's regular cast, the tube gives us a Barney for "Mission Impossible" and a Mark for "Ironside," while the cinema follows suit.

But in both media, producers have failed to produce, to come up with believable Negro characterizations for lead roles. The breakthrough of "I Spy," which almost (but not quite) gave equal billing to Bill Cosby with white Robert Culp, preceded "Julia," a pleasant middle-class fantasy — not that there aren't middle-class Negroes, but simply that "Julia" somehow didn't make it — which was followed by Redd Foxx in "Sanford and Son," a sort of poor relation to "All in the Family." Rowan and Martin's "Laugh-In" has been most successful in using Negro comedians in ways that both show off their special talents and avoid tokenism, romanticization, condescension and exploitation. "Laugh-In's" imitators have followed a similar pattern. And Flip Wilson has made it to the very top on TV — in comedy. Yet believable Negro lead characters in straight dramatic roles have not developed on TV to any great degree.

But at least the tube's excesses in star-

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ring roles ("Amos and Andy" then, "Sanford and Son" now, for instance) have been minor, and TV's attempts at accurate representation in secondary roles has been notable ("Mod Squad" is superlative in this regard). While the same thing can be said for the cinema about the latter point, regretable caricaturing has now become almost standard in that medium in lead characterizations. Although an individual theatre movie usually costs more to make than any one segment of a television series, there are no theoretical limits to the number of movies that can be made, whereas prime-time TV series are necessarily quite a few each season. TV producers fear to make a collosal mistake that will haunt them for twenty or thirty-nine episodes, and so timidity reigns on TV far more than in the movies. Accordingly, daring can more easily prevail, for better or worse, in the theatre cinema. Unfortunately, the result has been not many bold, successful films depicting Negroes in major roles at least as true to life as those depicting whites, but rather a spate of really poor flicks starting probably with *Shaft* and from there multiplying almost geometrically, getting more frequent — and worse.

Shaft spawned *Shaft's Big Score*, a lamentably gross rip-off; more will come of that lineage. *Superfly* and *Slaughter* are out of *Shaft*, abortively. *Blacula* would be camp, though camp is dead, were it not so unintentially awful. Originally designed for TV, and showing it, *The Man* wound up on your downtown picture show screen owing to an accurate evaluation of the level of cinema tastes of the average American film-goer. As the "black" film perhaps taken most seriously in the last two years, *The Man* requires at least a bit more discussion.

The President, Vice President and House Speaker all go to their reward, simultaneously. Which leaves the President Pro-tem of the Senate, a Negro (James Earl Jones) put there out of fashionable considerations. Hence: a Negro President, all of a sudden, who decides to *Assert Himself*. Best by faddish radicalism at home (a with-it offspring who chides him for his Brookeishness) and restless political power-brokers beating the drums outside, The Man can't "hack it."

The fact of the matter today, and for the forseeable future, is that only a Negro as competent, Establishhment-liberal, and smooth as Edward Brooke of Massachusetts is likely to sit in the Senate. A Brooke could indeed become President Pro-tem of the Senate. In the highly implausible event of the deaths of those ahead of him in the line of presidential succession, such a man could become President of the United States. Or, four years hence, vice presidential candidate with someone like Spiro Agnew at the head of the ticket, and then president. Such a Negro politico would not be *The Man*. Any honest attempt to picture Negroes in politics at the highest levels, in a film shot in 1972 about the approximate present, might be expected to start with things as they are. *The Man* doesn't. The best of a bad and extensive lot of what might be called Black Fantasy films, *The Man* is nonetheless dismal.

I captioned this piece "Black Mischief," borrowing a good title from an Evelyn Waugh book. But since whites are also responsible for some of these films — and almost totally to blame for what occurs on television — the burden of guilt can be spread together and equally. If the Negro film audience is so witless as to accept these movies seriously, they more or less deserve what they'll get; if white film-goers — and critics — can't bring themselves to excoriate these sillinesses, out of fear perhaps of appearing "racist," they demonstrate, in effect, a genuine facet of racism: condescension. □

EDITORIAL II

(continued from page 4)

It has not been "man" but specific Arab governments that have allowed the terrorists to operate in and from their states, supplied them with money, arms, and ammunition, and encouraged them to carry on their activities. It has not been "man" but Red China and the Soviet Union that have given diplomatic support and even directly supplied arms to the terrorists. To treat the slaughter in Munich as an example of "man's inhumanity to man" is to deprive the event of its particular reality and make it difficult to determine who is responsible and, therefore, who is to blame.

As for the proposition that "violence solves nothing," it is just as meaningless as the proposition that "violence solves everything." The fact that the proposition is meaningless does not trouble the people who utter it, for they are not aware of its meaninglessness. What they are aware of is their abhorrence of violence, their commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, and their desire to see violence end. When they say "violence solves nothing," they are not so much stating a fact as declaring a faith and expressing a hope. By repeating propositions like "violence solves nothing," they are trying to persuade others not to use violence. But people such as the Arab terrorists and their supporters are not going to take such propositions seriously. The only people who are likely to take such propositions seriously are people who are not disposed to use violence in the first place, and some of these people have the responsibility of coping with the terrorists. Propositions like "violence solves nothing" will not influence the terrorists, but they may inhibit other people from taking strong action against the terrorists.

Mourning—and moralizing—over dead Jews is an old tradition, but this tradition should at least be supplemented by vigorous efforts to protect Jews and other people from being attacked and killed by Arab terrorists. Such efforts should include thorough intelligence work to detect Arab terrorists and planned terrorist operations, adequate security measures to thwart terrorist operations that are actually carried out and swift and severe punishment for terrorists who are captured. Our government and other governments—if there are any—that are neither totally committed to the Arab states nor totally committed to being non-committed can put diplomatic and economic pressure on the Arab states that harbor terrorists and other states that support them. Some people argue that it would not be "pragmatic" to put pressure on these states, but a pragmatism that consists essentially of making arrangements with anyone under any circumstances, and that is uninformed by either ends or values, must result in political ruin or, perhaps what is worse, the ruin of the people who adopt it.

For its part, Israel should maintain its determination to combat the terrorists wherever it can. Fortunately, Israel has not been suduced into paralysis by those who lament "man's inhumanity to man" and proclaim that "violence solves nothing." Like all civilized and decent people, the Israelis are reluctant to use violence but they know, from many years of horrible experience, that, if civilized and decent people are to live in peace, barbarians and butchers must not have their way.

Israel should attack the terrorists and it should receive the support of our government for doing so, not only because it is practically necessary but because it is morally imperative. To attack people who conceive and carry out such acts as the murder of the eleven Israeli Olympians is, among other things, to give concrete expression to moral outrage. Violence has spread wantonly in recent years leading some persons to conclude that violence benumbs a man's senses and a nation's conscience. This is a dangerous misperception. It is not so much that our senses have been benumbed by violence as it is that we have failed to respond with morally justified action. It is not numbness that has set in; it is paralysis—paralysis induced by fatuous moralizing. Moral sentiments that are not given concrete expression become inauthentic or extinct, and moralizing is not an acceptable substitute for concrete moral action. To do little or nothing but moralize over the slaughter at Munich is not a sign of a higher morality or even of pragmatism. It is a sign of cowardice and indifference, and such a sign can only encourage the spread of lawlessness, mayhem and death, not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

Terry Krieger

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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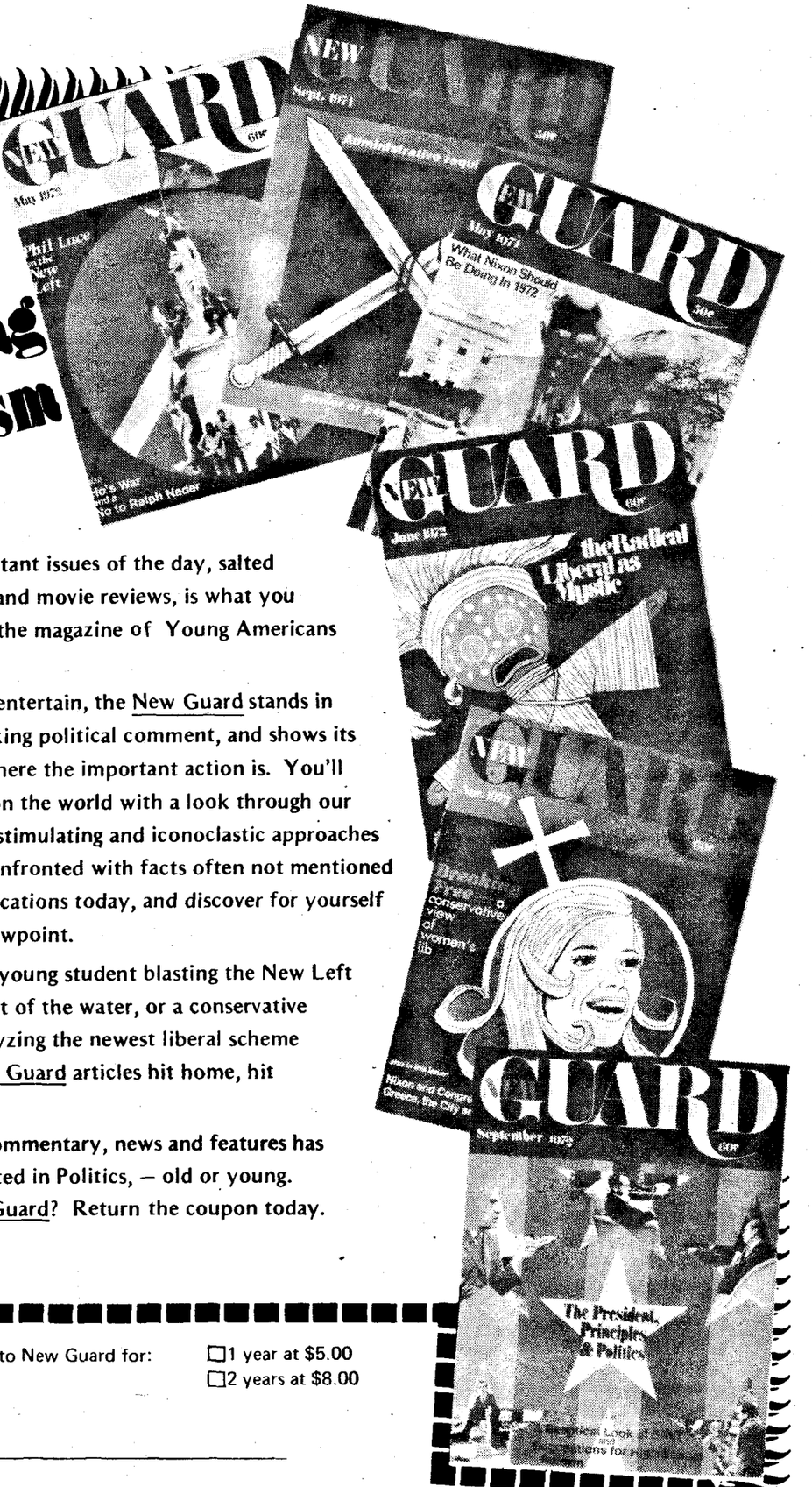

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"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad"– Euripedes

Current Wisdom

CREDIBILITY

Proof that no one is going to put one over on Frank Reynolds:

After a brief talk to the New Hampshire legislature, Muskie went outside to, as his printed schedule put it, mix with the citizens, most of whom were high school age and practically all of whom were recruited by his staff.

— Frank Reynolds
ABC News
Jan. 6, 1972

MORE CREDIBILITY

Proof that there remain exceptions to every rule, as the oracular Dr. Reynolds takes a bath:

Muskie will not say tonight what he plans to do, but he will announce tomorrow that he is supporting George McGovern and will ask his delegates to vote for McGovern on the first ballot in Miami Beach.

— Frank Reynolds
ABC News
June 8, 1972

INCREDIBILITY

Proof that even while admitting to a mortifying botch some fellows can strut if they whip up enough melodrama and gas:

Muskie will not say tonight what he plans to do, but he will announce tomorrow that he is supporting George McGovern, and he is asking his delegates to vote for McGovern on the first ballot in Miami Beach. So, not for the first time I was wrong. You are looking at a man whose political education is obviously an ongoing process. Let this reinforce your skepticism about what you read and hear. It has certainly reinforced mine about what I am told by a certain member of Muskie's staff, who has never suggested that he did not know what the Senator was going to do. However, since Muskie himself now claims that he did not know, perhaps all mindreaders should now go to the woodshed. With a strong push from the Muskie Headquarters, I'm on my way.

— Frank Reynolds
ABC News
June 9, 1972

TABLE ETIQUETTE

Poor David Brinkley shows how difficult it is to talk intelligently while everyone else is eating:

Wallace has grabbed the busing issue, clutched it to his chest as if it were a bowling trophy with his name engraved on it, and he has held on to it.

— David Brinkley
NBC News
March 13, 1972

DROLLERIES

Mr. Eric Sevareid, generally appraised as television's most powerful intellect, flourishes his cerebral stuff:

Long ago Frank Lloyd Wright remarked that the continent is on a tilt and everything loose is sliding into Southern California. Now, a lot of things are sliding out of southern California. Richard Nixon was at loose ends and slid eastward right into the presidency. Now, Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles, having produced peace, love, beauty and fresh air locally is sliding east to campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Why not. The ultimate meaning of the one-man one-vote principle is that everyone may run for office and vote for himself. Those with the most cousins and brothers-in-law on their private payroll will be elected.

— Eric Sevareid
CBS News
November 16, 1971

CANDID CAMERA

A rare moment of candor in David Brinkley's delirious Journal:

John, I have only a few random, aimless, pointless, disjointed ramblings about holding a political primary down here in Florida. It's an interesting, curious state. At the northern end, there is often extreme poverty, marginal farmers in tar-paper shacks with privies out back and hand-wringer washers on the front porch, whereas down here in Miami Beach it must be possible, averaging about three people to a car, for the entire population to ride around in Cadillacs. It's the only place I've seen where they have traffic jams of all Cadillacs.

— David Brinkley
NBC News
March 14, 1972

BRAIN DRAIN

Mr. Eric Sevareid, the handsomest man in television, pops his shower cap:

In New Hampshire Muskie won but lost, while McGovern lost but won. In Florida Muskie lost but lost, McGovern lost but lost, Humphrey lost but won and Wallace won but won.

— Eric Sevareid
CBS News
March 15, 1972

TELEVISION HUMOR

While commenting after Mayor David Kennedy of Miami, Florida had endorsed Senator Humphrey for the presidency, Roger Mudd, humorist, archly sketched several large truths:

How warm, wonderful and beautiful it is to have a Kennedy on your side, even though his first name is David and he has a Baltimore accent.

— Roger Mudd
CBS News
Nov. 16, 1971

CAUSE AND EFFECT

The art of causality as practiced by one of television's great minds:

Two years ago Senator Joseph Tidings ran for re-election from the state of Maryland. He had introduced federal gun control laws, so the gun lobby mounted a massive attack and defeated him. Those who did so may now survey the conspicious fruit of their zeal — the shooting of George Wallace, in Maryland today. One feels hopeless protesting the gun cult that prevails in this nation, as in no other nation, but one *has* to do it.

— Howard K. Smith
ABC News
May 15, 1972

VISIONS OF AN OPIUM SMOKER

Another curious passage from David Brinkley's Journal, a program that NBC fancies as political commentary:

New York City's Metropolitan Opera, on tour, opened last night in Cleveland with *La Traviata* and in the Opera House was Humphrey. Well, on the stage, Alfred's father was complaining that Alfred had to end his sinful relationship with Violetta because it was scandalizing the family and making it difficult for Alfred's sister to marry anyone of good family and money. While between the acts, Humphrey was in the audience shaking hands and saying if elected he would get the economy back on its feet. While on the stage, Violetta could not stay on her feet because she was dying in Alfred's arms, though, of course, not until she had finished singing her aria. Well, after she expired Humphrey said he liked the opera a lot and he hoped all these folks would vote for him. And that was today's episode in the system at work, somehow making democracy live.

— David Brinkley
NBC News
May 2, 1972

POLARIZATION

Another specimen from the candidate of gentleness who promises to bring us together:

Any young person who supports President Nixon is too confused to know which end is up.

— George McGovern
ABC News
Sept. 10, 1972

DELECTATIONS

George McGovern talks of politics and South Dakota cuisine in a memorable, in depth, interview with CBS:

If I don't win any delegates in Wisconsin, I'll personally eat a crow on April 5.

— George McGovern
CBS News
March 29, 1972

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CONTINUING CRISIS
(continued from page 2)

Govern appeared on Wall Street with a revised set of miscalculations for economic joy. His new policy will cost the government more, but not the citizens. Lightning struck the *Wall Street Journal* on September 19. A Brazilian company has produced a hot dog made of fish, and Detroit's 1973 models are out.

• The Olympics are over as are the Nineteenth World Plowing Championships held in Vernon Center, Minnesota and won by Mr. Willi Flatwitzer of Austria. The SALT agreement was accepted by the Senate, and Congress agreed to the accord on September 26. Apparently, ignorant of the result of a recent Puerto Rican election in which only 4,205 of 702,601 voters desired independence, an organization calling itself the United Nations Committee on Colonialism took up the question of American imperialism in Puerto Rico. Shortly thereafter, the United States showed displeasure at bankrolling 31.5 per cent of the UN budget, though on September 25 the *New York Times* editorialized that the United States could be assessed as much as thirty-five per cent.

• Left wing and right wing students entered into an internecine dialectic in the streets of Chile while schools opened quietly in much of the United States. HEW announced that overall enrollment was the lowest in twenty-eight years even though the college population was up 500,000, bringing the grand total of prospective truth seekers and wowsers in the American Empire to nine million. One cause for the tranquility on the campuses might be that many universities featured updated curricula which drew students away from mischief and into serious study. Universities began offering courses in comic book appreciation, jews'-harp tuning, advanced ghetto jargon, yogurt culturing, transcendent metaphysical dialogue and conversation, the phonics of peace, elementary Gullah, Trauma I and II, slang for beginners and much more. One eastern university offered a comparative biographical study of Richard Speck, Charles Manson, Charles Whitman, Bob Hope and Richard Nixon. So the universities remain the cultural centers of the nation, but tension did show through at Scottsdale Community College where the state judiciary and university administration ganged up on students when they voted to nickname their athletic teams the "Artichokes" with colors of pink and white. Denying any jocose intent, Student President Roger Brooks put a serious tone on the affair when he bespoke the highest ideals and intentions of younger generation by declaring that the students' preference represented a "nonaggressive symbol and showed the students' preference for academics over athletics."

• Mr. Bobby Fisher became America's first World Chess Champion by beating Boris Spassky of Russia. Mr. Clyde Helmen of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania grew a stalk of corn measuring fifteen feet, eight inches. And Preston Broder of New Haven, Connecticut announced that he has collected one pound of body lint since he began college. Furba, the oldest polar bear in the world, passed away at his Frankfurt residence, while in Chicago, Charles J. Correll, radio's Andy of "Amos and Andy," suffered a fatal heart attack.

• James Hoffa was taken for a ride by the renowned Mr. William L. Taub, LL.B. On September 12 the Senate Armed Services Committee began disinterring the records of General John D. Lavelle, who seems to have conducted an unauthorized war. Mr. Kissinger continued to serve the President from thirty thousand feet, traveling this time to meetings with Leonid Brezhnev, the North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese and several French ladies whose names have been withheld. President Chester Arthur's life shone in a new light when much new evidence concerning his career turned up amongst the possessions of the recently deceased Chester Arthur III, a Los Angeles Guru. And finally congratulations must be extended, even at this late date, to a twenty-three-year-old youth from Temperance, Michigan who hit upon a mode of youthful revolt commending itself to popular emulation, when he did himself in on a national shrine in Washington, D.C. □

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